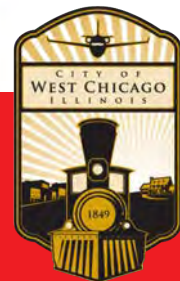


Adelante
West Chicago
Forward



City of West Chicago
Comprehensive Plan



MESSAGE FROM MAYOR PINEDA



Hello, West Chicago. Welcome to West Chicago Forward.

In late 2020, the City began work to update its Comprehensive Plan. We named it West Chicago Forward / West Chicago Adelante because it focuses on what we want West Chicago to be for the next 20 years and for generations to come. I am happy to report that we have now completed that planning process. This document, West Chicago Forward, is the result of that work.

West Chicago Forward invited every resident and business owner in West Chicago to contribute to this Plan. We had one simple and powerful ask: help shape the future of your City for yourself, your families and the next generation of West Chicagoans by sharing your ideas, opinions, and suggestions on improving the quality of community life.

We wanted to hear from you, and we did. Thank you to all of you who offered your ideas and feedback by filling out surveys, participating in interviews, being part of community conversations, visiting the website, attending public meetings and events, sharing information with your family members and neighbors, and more.

Even though the Plan is finished, the work of it is just beginning. The invitation to participate and make the West Chicago Forward goals reality is still open. We hope that you'll join us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruben Pineda". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mayor Ruben Pineda

MESSAGE FOR CHAMPIONS

The West Chicago Forward Comprehensive Plan would not exist without input from residents, business leaders, government partners, nonprofit organization representatives, and many others who contributed their expertise and ideas.

West Chicago Forward has worked incredibly hard to reach the City's old and new residents, to learn from partner government agencies and a wide variety of other stakeholders, to hear from business leaders and owners, to engage with the Latino community, to make sure that the planning process was accessible to Spanish speakers, and to reflect the voices of young people in this Plan.

We invite everyone, especially residents and others who serve West Chicagoans, to continue championing this plan and its goals and values. If you have already contributed your ideas and support, thank you. If you have not, you still have a chance.

Accompanying this Plan is an Action Kit for how you, West Chicago's champions and residents, can take action and help us reach the future we envisioned together, step by step. Be sure to tag us and share on social media your pictures and stories about what you're doing—and thank you for all you have already done to move West Chicago Forward.





Adelante West Chicago Forward

City of West Chicago
Comprehensive Plan

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OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

West Chicago is a diverse, historical city in western DuPage County. It is located between Geneva to the west and Winfield to the east, just minutes from the Fox and DuPage Rivers. In the mid-1800s, the City was founded as the first railroad town in Illinois. Early on, European and Mexican immigrants settled here. Today West Chicago is proud of the lasting diversity of its residents and is home to one of the most vibrant Latino-heritage communities in suburban Chicago.

While boasting commuter rail, easily accessible highways, and the DuPage Airport, West Chicago is still most recognized for its small-town America charm and community spirit. The City's classic

Downtown and historic buildings clustered around the railroad invite residents and visitors alike to appreciate West Chicago's assets and history. The hundreds of acres of green space and trails provide abundant recreational and nature opportunities.

West Chicago is the place where "history and progress meet." Accordingly, the City is ready to move forward into the future while valuing its rich history. All comprehensive plans envision the long-term future of communities. They think about the relationships of people, place, and economy. They also help cities ensure effective decision-making around growth and development. Comprehensive plans also help cities stay competitive when it comes to allocating funding and resources. They put into words a community's vision for itself so that the public sector is clear on priorities and can gauge how to respond. Comprehensive plans also encourage the private sector to align its efforts or initiate new ones.

This Comprehensive Plan, West Chicago Forward, does all of that. It also provides a needed update to the 1995 West Chicago Comprehensive Plan and 2006 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map. This Plan reflects changes since that time and gives clear direction for the future.

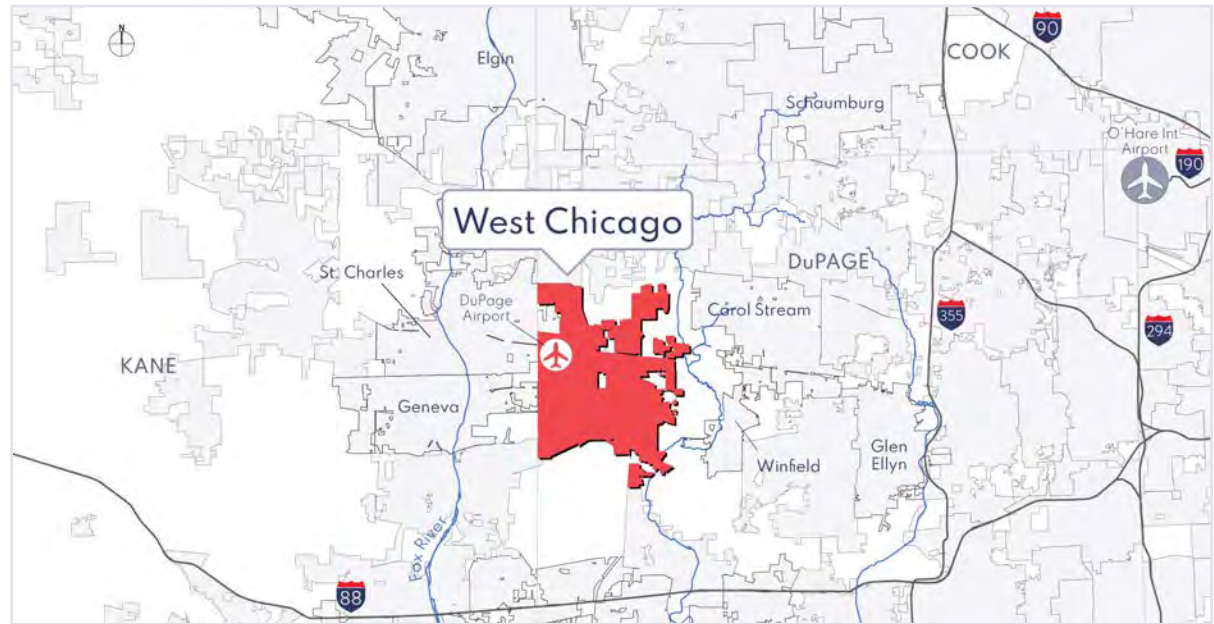
The West Chicago Forward Comprehensive Plan design was the most inclusive planning process to date in the City. The planning process made special outreach efforts to gain

feedback and insight from populations who often do not get invitations to participate, particularly Spanish speakers and young people. The research and analysis found here, combined with extensive community involvement and feedback, position West Chicago Forward as an essential development and decision-making guide for the City through 2042 and beyond. Notably, it is also a reflection of community values and ideas.

The layout of West Chicago Forward also reflects that same inclusiveness. The following pages present both cross-cutting big ideas for an ideal West Chicago and specific recommendations in various policy areas. This Plan focuses directly on activating, connecting, and supporting—these are the actions we all can take today to move West Chicago Forward and ensure a vibrant future for all of us who live, work, and play in West Chicago.

West Chicago in the Region

West Chicago is a diverse, historical city in western DuPage County, recognized for its railroad history and lasting diversity.



City of West Chicago



© Mark Baldwin



MUSE Community + Design

To invite residents and other stakeholders to participate in moving West Chicago Forward, this Comprehensive Plan also features an Action Kit to inspire people of all ages to come together and start implementing ideas big and small.

To highlight interrelated ideas and turn them into action, three aspects of life organize West Chicago Forward: People, Place, and Economy.

Specifically, this Plan:

- creates the vision for future growth and change in West Chicago;
- clarifies where to encourage change and where things should stay the same; and
- reinforces the importance of thinking about change in a holistic way to support wise spending of public dollars and functional, complete neighborhoods.

West Chicago Forward clarifies the community's desires and the City's intentions so that it can be a guiding document for the future. With this clarity and predictability, the City can improve efforts to attract and retain businesses and residents, support public and private investment, and enhance quality of life. This updated Comprehensive Plan positions the City of West Chicago to manage change rather than simply react. The City will be able to make necessary investments and improvements, and continue providing high-quality services.

West Chicago Forward's organization is as follows:

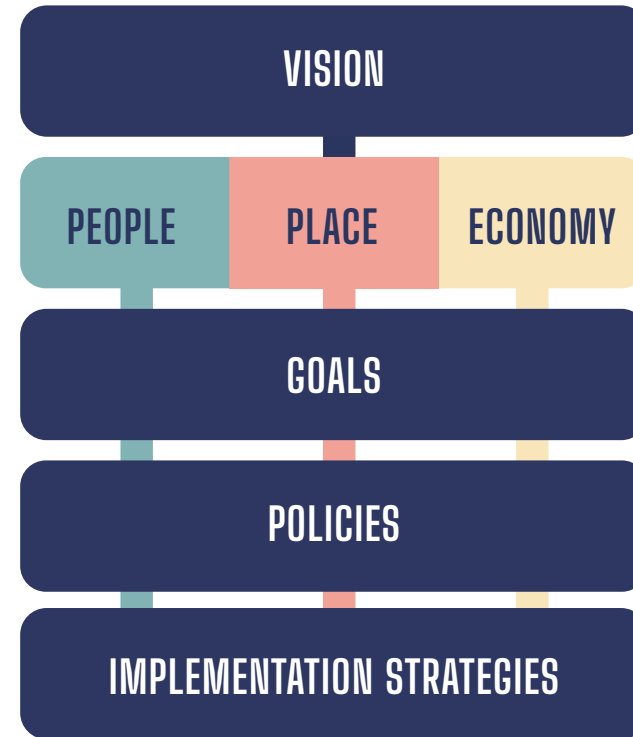
- The Vision connects what makes West Chicago great with its hopes for the future.
- Goals are more specific aspirations that will help the City achieve the Vision.
- "Big ideas" are focused topic areas that individual stakeholders and past plans raised—they appear up front to emphasize and align energy, efforts, and resources for West Chicago's future.
- The three organizing themes for the Plan's policies are People, Place, and Economy.
- Within each theme, implementation strategies present ways to achieve policies.



How to Use This Plan

A Comprehensive Plan sets forth the community's shared vision to align resources and efforts and help manage change and shape the future. By outlining ideas and providing steps to achieve those ideas, City staff, residents, and other stakeholders can do their part to bring about desired results. City staff and decision makers should use the Plan to evaluate proposed changes across various policy areas and ensure that they are in concert with the overall shared vision. Specifically, City staff and decision makers should use the plan to do the following:

- inform decisions and expenditures, including development review, code enforcement, annual budgeting, and capital improvement planning;
- seek grants and other forms of funding to achieve the plan's recommendations;
- update ordinances, policies, processes, and regulations to implement the Plan;
- align Departments' work plans and staffing to clarify responsibility for implementing the plan; and
- engage the public by talking about and revisiting the Plan regularly and with proposed policy changes.





VISION

West Chicago City officials, residents, and other stakeholders crafted this vision for the future of West Chicago:

West Chicago is a vibrant tapestry of neighbors who come together, from next door and across town, to celebrate diversity, heritage, and wellness, and to support thriving businesses of all sizes, always demonstrating an unwavering commitment to green space and the environment.



PLAN GOALS

West Chicago Forward ensures a thriving, vibrant West Chicago well into the future. The future West Chicago is active, connected, and economically strong. It can respond to any uncertainty or challenges the future may hold. The goals of West Chicago Forward reflect input from the City, community members, and other stakeholders. These overarching and focused goals guide the recommendations and implementation of this Plan through 2042.

OVERARCHING PLAN GOALS

- Ensure orderly development and redevelopment that is consistent with West Chicago's history, values, and aspirations.
- Ensure that public services and facilities align with and support private-sector development and redevelopment.
- Celebrate and share West Chicago's hometown pride and high quality of life.
- Encourage active participation in City decision-making.



FOCUSED GOALS

PEOPLE: ACTIVATE

- Align resources and efforts to reinforce Downtown as a place to visit and live.
- Leverage West Chicago’s unique history, special events, and arts and culture to connect neighbors.
- Provide opportunities for gathering through programming, promotion, and placemaking.
- Provide a range of housing options to accommodate all ages, backgrounds, and life stages.

PLACE: CONNECT

- Provide connections within and beyond West Chicago.
- Enhance recognition of and navigation to the City’s businesses and amenities.
- Create active and green transportation options.
- Leverage trails and open space in support of other goals.

ECONOMY: SUPPORT

- Invest in existing and future small businesses and small business owners.
- Support existing local businesses of all sizes.
- Attract new small businesses and retain existing ones.
- Draw attention to West Chicago’s existing assets.
- Support Downtown and Downtown-adjacent businesses and employees.



BIG IDEAS

West Chicago has a history of strong leadership and active community groups. These “big ideas” harness that energy and align efforts to help achieve a thriving and vibrant West Chicago.

See the recommended policies and implementation strategies for each topic area for more information on attaining these big ideas and individual recommendations.



DOWNTOWN: THE HEART OF WEST CHICAGO



A MORE CONNECTED WEST CHICAGO



SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATION AND SUPPORT

BIG IDEAS

DOWNTOWN: THE HEART OF WEST CHICAGO

Downtown West Chicago is an ideal gathering place for residents and visitors. Local pride in Downtown is strong. Downtown deserves more people in the area and on the street, more visible activity, more economic bustle, more destinations, and more reason to get out and enjoy everything it has to offer.

Adaptive reuse of a historical train depot will draw residents and visitors. The charming streetscape of low-traffic Turner Court is unique. The wide sidewalks and two-story historical storefronts of Main, Washington, and Galena Streets have outstanding potential to attract West Chicago residents and visitors to patronize shops, share a meal, and gather with friends or get some fresh air. The West Chicago Public Library and West Chicago City Hall are also in Downtown, further cementing Downtown as the heart of civic and social life in West Chicago.



BIG IDEAS

When Downtown West Chicago thrives, all of West Chicago thrives.

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT...

- Leverage partnerships around West Chicago's cultural and arts programming to support a community cornerstone: the focused redevelopment of the 1869 Chicago & North Western Depot.
- Increase and support residential housing Downtown, including transit-oriented development.
- Enhance connections and wayfinding to open spaces and recreational areas for pedestrians, bikers, drivers, and all others on the move.
- Improve and expand support for current and potential businesses and owners to locate or grow their businesses Downtown.
- Inspire bold, creative, and fun placemaking ideas and special events for residents and visitors.

DOWNTOWN: THE HEART OF WEST CHICAGO



Increase housing and business opportunities Downtown

Beautify open spaces and connections

Inspire bold, creative ideas

Create parklets to invite people to gather

BIG IDEAS

A MORE CONNECTED WEST CHICAGO

Planes, trains, automobiles—there are plenty of ways to get to and from West Chicago. West Chicago Forward provides ideas to make moving around town just as easy. The City has unparalleled access to DuPage County trails and forest preserves. Its parks, historic districts, and walkable Downtown create reasons for people to be out and about. Leveraging trails and open space also supports active transportation, or people-powered biking, rolling, and walking.

A revitalized Downtown can mean more people out and about. Safe intersections and safe routes to school are essential for

any city. Enhanced active transportation infrastructure goes hand in hand with the City's commitment to Healthy West Chicago. It will also allow more people to feel safe, get some exercise, and make healthier choices.

A very connected West Chicago that is easy to get around in many different ways can promote a safe and comfortable transportation network for everyone. It will also be easier for people of all ages can get to where they need to go, whether home, work, school, or play.

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT...

- Focus on trail-oriented development to increase trail use by West Chicagoans and visitors.
- Enhance existing infrastructure to make physical activity and healthy choices easy and fun.
- Increase access to goods and services, employment, open space, and recreation.
- Reduce barriers around existing rail and road infrastructure.
- Inspire bold, creative, and fun placemaking ideas and special events for residents and visitors.



Focus on trails to increase ridership

Kress Rd

Hawthorne Ln

Industrial Dr



Connect Metra to Downtown and beyond

Church St



Enhance infrastructure for healthy choices

Ridgeland Av

Geneva Rd



Improve community access to businesses and jobs

Technology Blvd



Enhance access and walkability

Oak Av

Easton Av

Main St

BIG IDEAS

SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATION AND SUPPORT

There are many great local businesses, restaurants, and retailers in West Chicago, and the City can be home to even more distinctive businesses. West Chicago's small-town charm and historical Downtown position it to offer shopping experiences that are difficult to replicate online or at a national chain, or hard to find just a short drive away.

West Chicago can invest in existing and future small businesses and in people who want to become business owners. The City can collaborate with real estate professionals, developers, and other local entities to prioritize capital improvements that benefit the business community. This will draw attention to West Chicago's existing assets and support innovative and interesting small businesses, and a wide variety of business owners. Residents from across DuPage County and the region will visit West Chicago businesses.



BIG IDEAS

When West Chicago small businesses thrive, all of West Chicago thrives.

THIS IS HOW WE DO IT...

- Support existing and future small businesses and guide entrepreneurs to successfully bring their ideas to fruition, with a strong focus on Downtown and Latino- and minority-owned businesses.
- Increase opportunities for small businesses to reach new audiences through pop-ups, short-term leases, creative partnerships, and special events.
- Ease regulations and permitting requirements for small businesses.
- Expand small business financial incentives and connect small businesses to financing opportunities.
- Identify opportunities for recreational or food and beverage businesses along the Prairie Path, and explore partnerships to market those opportunities.

SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATION AND SUPPORT

Use wayfinding signage to let people know where to visit in West Chicago



Expand mobile vending and special events



Support entrepreneurs through pop-ups and markets

Identify food and drink business opportunities Downtown



PROCESS



To create cross-cutting big ideas and specific recommendations, the early phase of the West Chicago Forward planning process had three stages:

1. Establishing a baseline and City profile through GIS mapping and demographic trend analysis.

2. Engaging community members for feedback and input.
3. Analyzing of all information and feedback gathered.

For more information and resident-focused reports on existing conditions that informed this Plan, visit

<https://westchicago.org>.

The recommendations in West Chicago Forward also draw on past planning efforts. This Plan updates and incorporates, where appropriate, recommendations from many previous guiding documents.

LOCAL PLANS AND ORDINANCES

Central-Main Street Redevelopment Plan (2018)

Commercial Storefront Design Guidelines: Turner Junction Historic District (1991)

Healthy West Chicago Community Action Plan (2015)

Market Study for the Route 59-North Avenue Study Area (2017)

West Chicago Residential Design Guideline Manual (2002)

West Chicago Strategic Plan (2016)

West Chicago Zoning Ordinance (2021)

West Chicago: Economic Development Plan—2020-2024 (2020)

West Chicago: Strategic Marketing Plan (2017)

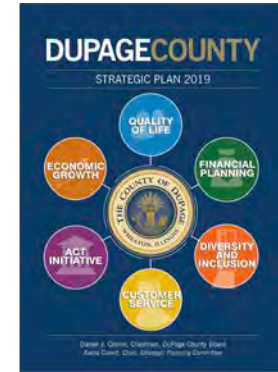
West Chicago: Comprehensive Land Use Map (2006)

REGIONAL PLANS AND GUIDING DOCUMENTS

DuPage County Transportation Plan(s) (various in progress)

CMAP On to 2050 (2015, ongoing)

DuPage County Strategic Plan (2019)



CITY PROFILE

This West Chicago profile provides a snapshot of where the City is today to make informed decisions for the future of West Chicago. For more detail on the data that informed West Chicago Forward, see www.westchicago.org.

PEOPLE

West Chicago's population is very diverse. West Chicagoans represent many different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and cultures, and the City is known as a center of the Mexican American community in Chicagoland. Whether Spanish, Burmese, Tagalog, Polish, Arabic, or another language, most of West Chicago's 25,700 residents speak a language other than English at home.

West Chicago's two public school districts that primarily serve West Chicago residents are District 33, which offers free early childhood education, preschool, and elementary school, and District 94, West Chicago Community High School. Enrollment in both Districts reflects the City's diverse population, and the Districts serve children and families from more than a dozen cultures. Elgin School District U-46 and St. Charles Community Unit School District 303 also serve part of West Chicago. The nearby high-enrollment community colleges

of College of DuPage and Elgin Community College also serve West Chicago residents, and several other colleges and universities are close to West Chicago.

PLACE

West Chicago is approximately 30 miles from downtown Chicago. The City is less than 15 miles from Aurora and Naperville, the second- and fourth-largest cities in Illinois. Today, the City's railroad history lives on in the West Chicago Metra Station, where riders shuttle to downtown Chicago in an hour, and in the Union Pacific-West railway and other cargo and logistics activity along the line.

Area highways provide many connections to and through the City. West Chicago is 20 minutes north of I-88 and 20 minutes west of I-355. The commercial corridor of North Avenue (IL-64) is near its northern border and Roosevelt Road (IL-38) to its south. Roosevelt Road separates the City from the U.S. Department of Energy's Fermilab particle physics laboratory. Neltnor Boulevard (IL-59) is a major north-south State highway that runs to the Wisconsin border and cuts through eastern West Chicago. Across the City, it is an important commercial corridor with development and redevelopment opportunities. West Chicago is also home to the four-runway DuPage Airport and Flight Center, a premier business and recreational aviation center.

Green space surrounds West Chicago, nicely balancing its transportation assets. The DuPage County Forest Preserve District manages the Blackwell, Timber Ridge, and West Branch Forest Preserves. The West Chicago Park District jointly owns the West Chicago Prairie, at the heart of the City and one of the most biodiverse sites in northeastern Illinois. West Chicago offers more than 300 acres of parkland and part of the Illinois Prairie Path, a popular 61-mile trail that crosses three counties and the first rails-to-trails conversion in the United States.

ECONOMY

West Chicago has a vibrant local economy and is a regional employment center. West Chicago has a diverse employment base, which is a key strength to any economy. West Chicago also has notable transportation advantages: truck routes, intermodal cargo transportation, and the DuPage Airport. The successful DuPage Business Center, the siting of an Amazon fulfillment center, the world headquarters of Ball Horticultural Company, and West Chicago's many industrial businesses reflect these advantages. The City also has a history of entrepreneurship. There are many successful local businesses, retailers, and restaurants.

West Chicago is between the Carol Stream-Geneva and Bloomingdale retail markets. Forest preserves, industrial areas, DuPage Airport, and Fermilab define its borders

and prevent attracting spending from non-West Chicago residents or employees. They can also make it harder to attract new businesses, particularly national retailers.

Left: A snapshot reveals details about people who call West Chicago home.

Right: Analysis of business data shows opportunities for the City to grow its business base.

Demographic Snapshot

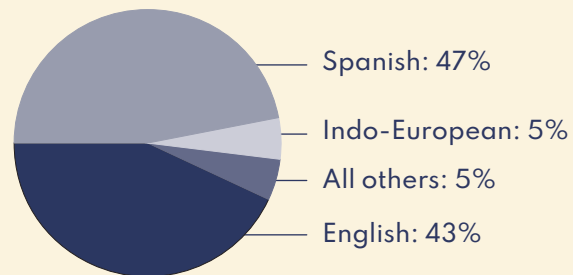
Median Age

Location	2010	2020	2025
West Chicago	30.2	32.8	34.4
DuPage County	38	39.6	40.6

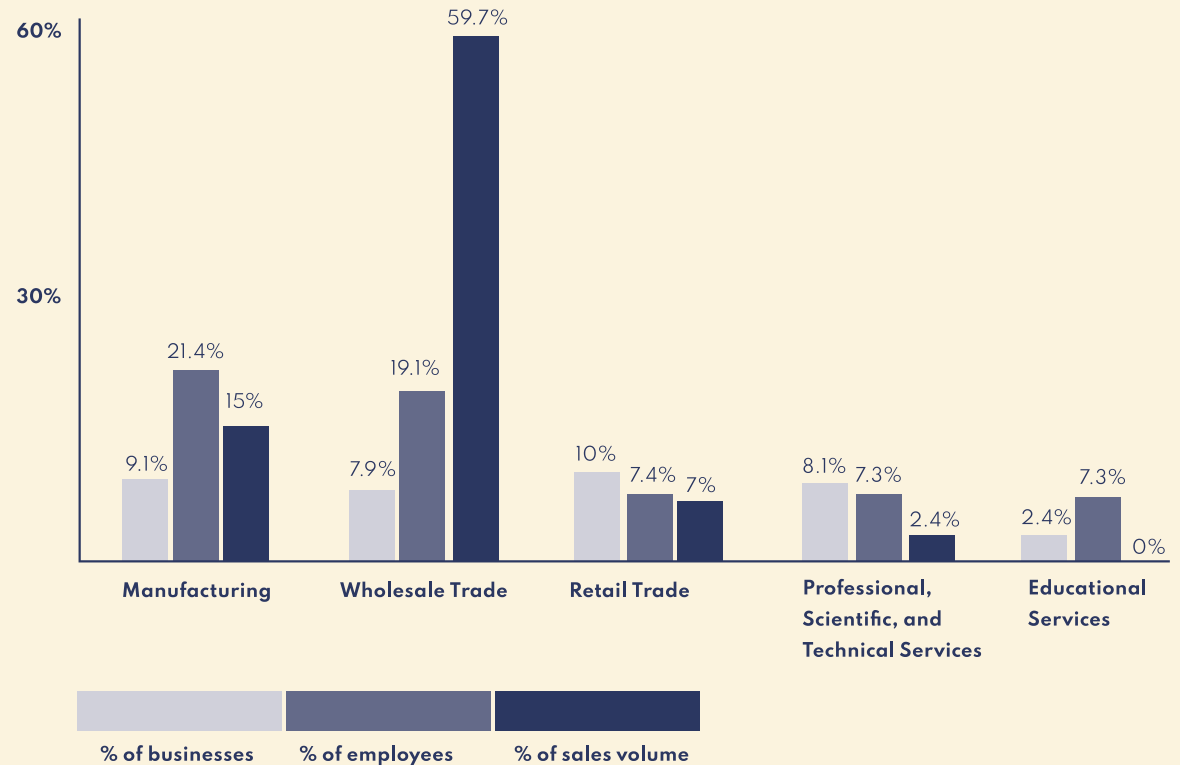
Nativity

63%	38%
US-born	Foreign-born

Languages Spoken at Home



Largest Businesses in West Chicago



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

West Chicago Forward launched in fall 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 public health crisis and the immense challenges in its wake. Traditional in-person engagement activities had to be very limited, but the planning process stayed committed to reaching residents and other stakeholders in various ways.

The planning process included four engagement stages:

1. Exchange information with residents and other stakeholders, and build awareness.
2. Gather information and research, and consult public opinions.
3. Invite residents and other stakeholders to discussions and collaborations.
4. Work together to generate ideas and recommendations.

In all four stages, the planning process strived to do the following:

- Meet City residents, old and new;
- Learn from the expertise of partner government agencies and a wide variety of other stakeholders;
- Hear from business leaders and owners;
- Engage with the Latino community and make the process accessible to Spanish speakers; and
- Reflect the voices of young people.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY:	STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS	RESIDENT & BUSINESS SURVEYS	VISIONING	FOCUS AREA WORKSHOPS	YOUTH ENGAGEMENT	OPEN HOUSE
WHO PARTICIPATED:	8 stakeholders and community leaders	Community Market volunteers, Library staff, St. Andrew parishioners ~25 people total	695 residents 34 business representatives	Community School Coordinators, Library Board Trustees, WeGo Together for Kids, Plan Commission ~40 people total	Key stakeholders, partners, City officials & City staff ~36 people total	District 33 youth participating at CAPE summer arts camp and their families ~50 people total	Residents visiting Kindred Coffee or La Michocana ~35 people total
WHAT WE HEARD (THEMES):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of cohesive identity • Untapped potential in Downtown • Civic participation • Small-town feel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing quality • Public events • Housing options • Youth walkability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More varied businesses Downtown • Downtown as a destination • Small-town feel • Diversity as a strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civic participation • Transportation challenges • Adaptive reuse • Amplify City communications • Infrastructure & safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity • Activate Downtown • Support small businesses • Amplify City communications • Community buy-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art helps build community • People care about each other • More programs & activities for youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support small businesses • Increase awareness about local destinations • Activate Downtown
	INFORMATION EXCHANGE		CONSULT & COLLECT INFO	DISCUSSION & COLLABORATION	IDEA GENERATION		

SPOTLIGHT

CHICAGO ARTS PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

When planning for the future, it's important that everyone have a seat at the table. Often, though, young people are not invited to share their opinions and hopes for the future of their city.

To make sure that young people felt welcomed into the planning process for West Chicago Forward, we partnered with a summer arts program led by Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education and District 33. Throughout the program, teachers and teaching artists worked with campers to explore social awareness—what it means to be part of a community and what a community needs.

During the student showcase in July, students and their families shared their ideas for a happy and healthy West Chicago and helped design streets to make everyone feel safe.



WHAT WE HEARD

“I enjoy the history of West Chicago mixed with the fact that my family anchored here decades ago.”

“Me gustaría ver que esta ciudad tenga buenos cambios para mesurar el futuro de nuestros hijos y se sientan orgullosos de vivir en una comunidad de inmigrantes.”

I'd like to see positive changes for this City to help the future of our children, so they feel proud to live in a community of immigrants.

“ I like living here a lot. I've lived in many states and cities, and here we have the best of the best. We are people who are very hardworking, humble, and close knit, and the schoolteachers are very dedicated.”

“West Chicago is a great town! We need to bring shops and restaurants that represent the majority of the community, more Hispanic-owned businesses while also incorporating a nice downtown feel. We need to make West Chicago be seen for the great community it is.”

“West Chicago es un pueblo muy unido”

The people of West Chicago are very united.

“Lo que más disfruto de vivir en West Chicago es que mi familia sea feliz.”

What I most enjoy about living in West Chicago is that my family is happy.



WHAT WE LOVE

Small-town feel

Family orientation

Active volunteerism

Strong arts community

Untapped potential

Diversity and multicultural life

Forest preserves and parks

Adaptive reuse opportunities for historical properties

Our West Chicago pride and identity

City pride

Bilingual and multicultural schools

Special events

WHAT WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE

Attract local tourism

Activate Downtown

Boost special events

Enhance ways to get around town

Create vibrant retail corridors

Cultivate civic participation

Continue building Spanish-language communication

Support youth and youth spaces

Support different kinds of housing options

Seek out voices who don't always speak up

Meet people where they are

Create bridges between neighbors



RECOMMENDATIONS

The following pages present recommendations organized around three themes: People, Place, and Economy. The recommendations will help achieve the vision, goals, and big ideas of West Chicago Forward. Some recommendations appear more than once to reinforce relationships between people, place, and economy.

There are two recommendation categories: policies and implementation strategies.

Policies are long-term guidance. They do not have to be implemented or completed by a certain date or time.

Implementation strategies are like the Plan's "to-do" list. When completed, the City may remove them from the Plan. The recommendations also appear in the implementation matrix at the end of the Plan for easy tracking of progress.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

**COMMUNITY BUILDING AND
CIVIC PARTICIPATION**

ALIGNED SERVICES

RECOMMENDATIONS

PEOPLE

The following recommendations focus on the people of West Chicago and on maintaining a high quality of life.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

West Chicago is a leader in promoting healthy choices and physical activity, especially through the Healthy West Chicago initiative. West Chicago has prioritized strategies and actions to avoid preventable diseases such as obesity and diabetes. It also promotes health and wellness to people of all ages. West Chicago Forward builds on and extends those initiatives.

In late 2021, COVID-19 variants were still affecting populations around the country. The City must also be ready to face and address any unforeseeable public health issues, as well as preventable disease and reduced barriers to health care.

Another ongoing challenge is social vulnerability. This is an index developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that analyzes available data at the level of Census tract to measure factors that are stressors on people's health, such as unemployment, educational attainment, households that speak English "less than well," access to a vehicle, and many others.

A continued focus on promoting health and wellness, will make a healthy West Chicago for everyone.

Policies

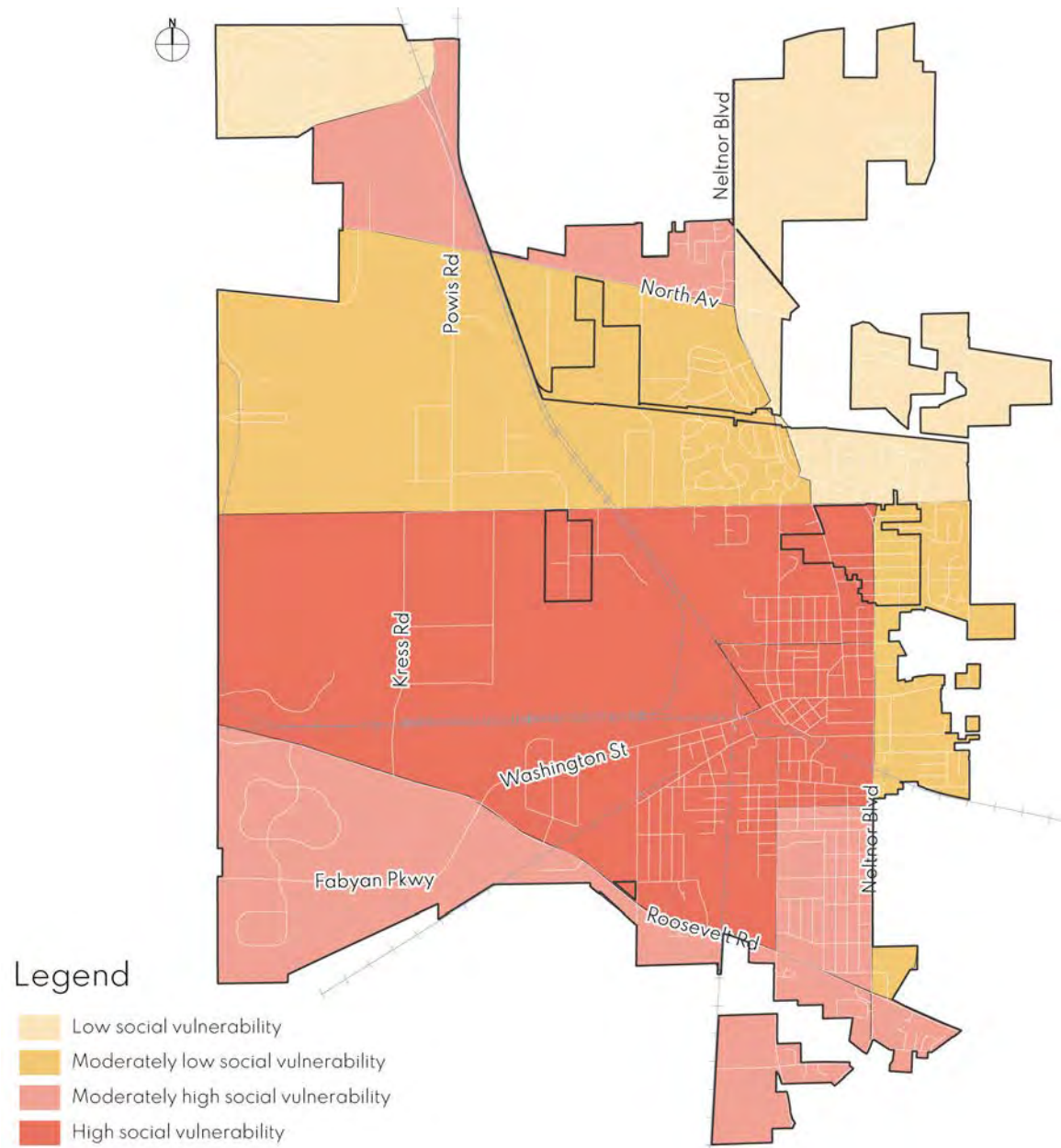
- Promote decisions, strategies, and programs, including Healthy West Chicago, that focus on the health and well-being of all of West Chicago's residents and their access to health care, information, social services, and physical activity and recreation.
- Engage public health practitioners in planning processes.
- Engage in information sharing with partners about populations in need to ensure that all West Chicagoans can access resources.
- Consider health-impact assessments as a planning tool for future decision-making. These assessments explore the potential impacts of any residential or commercial development on physical activity, the environment, and public safety.
- Prepare for unforeseeable future public health events and their effects on the City's residents, government, and economy by drawing on experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic and analyzing how lessons learned can remain useful and flexible into the future.
- Leverage community partners and the City's business network to disseminate public health information and collect feedback during challenging times.

Implementation Strategies

- Partner with local and regional health providers to invite and support the work of *promotores de salud* (community health workers typical in communities of Latin American origin) among West Chicago residents.
- Determine platforms and ways to reach different population groups quickly and effectively with vital information. Deliver alerts, notifications, and resources across multiple platforms (such as SMS, phone, and WhatsApp).
- Continue sharing and communicating public health resources and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and DuPage County Health Department with residents, businesses, and others. Share other public health resources as they emerge (such as State or County COVID-19 assistance).
- Incorporate best practices and tools from the national COVID-19 experience into operations and institutional knowledge to prepare for the future. Examples include food banks, government communications, considerations for people with disabilities, community emergency response teams, and volunteer management.

- Work with partners to support vaccination, testing facilities, and testing events, such as mobile vaccination.
- Incorporate any changes to City technology or services adopted during peak COVID-19 that will continue allowing for efficiencies without compromising quality (such as communications).
- Incorporate COVID-19 lessons learned into a policy document specific to West Chicago that addresses future public health issues, especially for vulnerable populations.
- Support local businesses that promote COVID-19 protection measures for employees, customers, and workplaces, including after updates or relaxation of federal, state, and local requirements.

Social Vulnerability by Census Tract in West Chicago



A HEALTHY AND ACTIVE WEST CHICAGO

Policies

- Promote decisions, strategies, and programs that focus on the health and well-being of all of West Chicago's residents and their access to health care, social services, and physical activity and recreation.
- Develop mutually beneficial partnerships to connect public health strategies and programs on nutrition, food access, local foods, and wellness to West Chicago's diverse populations.
- Encourage and celebrate physical activity at every turn for people of all ages and abilities.
- Encourage walking, biking, or rolling on streets and sidewalks, and provide easy ways for residents to participate in those activities. Ease any restrictions or existing policies that residents may perceive as discouraging those activities.
- Explore the joint use and co-location of future park and recreation spaces with schools and other recognized community connection points to encourage biking and walking.
- Consider all goals and strategies of Healthy West Chicago for healthy

lifestyles generally and find ways to connect them to City programs and services that promote outdoor activity and recreation.

- Enhance working relationships and collaboration with partners and supporters of Healthy West Chicago to continue cultivating a healthy West Chicago.
- Develop economic and recruitment strategies to attract health care providers and practitioners to West Chicago.

Implementation Strategies

- Continue to co-sponsor events and programming to support strategic priorities of the City and Healthy West Chicago (such as healthy and active lifestyles, increased trail use, and expanded active transportation opportunities).
- Partner with businesses and organizations to incorporate specific goals and strategies of Healthy West Chicago into offerings and programs (such as menu incentives or labeling, grocer promotion of beverages other than soft drinks, and public nutrition and cooking classes).
- Tap local businesses and organizations to distribute information and resources on City initiatives and healthy

living generally via their existing communications channels.

- Determine and publicize walking and biking distances between popular destinations for people of all ages (such as Reed-Keppler Park to the Woman's Christian Temperance Union Fountain on Main Street, or a walking loop that passes through all public parks in West Chicago).
- Determine a walking route for locals and visitors that highlights some of West Chicago's assets and favorite places. Residents and other stakeholders who participated in West Chicago Forward identified some of these during the planning process.
- Develop an annual bike and walk-run event that attracts regional visitors and participants (such as along the Prairie Path's Geneva Spur or through the historic districts).
- Activate spaces near Turner Court as oriented toward youth especially (but welcoming to all) in a way that harnesses young people's creativity and preferred activities (such as skateboarding and scooters) and is safe for businesses, riders, cars, and others.

- Explore partnerships with the Park District and local school districts for a “Friday Night Out” youth event at Park District facilities throughout the school year. Schools and families recognize a need for youth activities. The City can sponsor or help partners provide programming, gym space, and other needs (such as refreshments and in-kind donations). Increased youth participation translates to increased family participation.
- Explore ways to help strengthen connections between other government entities, the business community, and the West Chicago Park District to support sponsorships for low-cost or no-cost physical activity programs, facilities, and equipment for youth and families (such as family night, bicycles, and low-cost sports).
- Consult with the Park District and community organizations about working to create a network of community volunteers to lead outdoor recreation and groups visits in nearby parks and forest preserves.
- Explore partnerships with local health care education programs (such as College of DuPage Health Sciences programs) to increase access to and knowledge about health care services for West Chicago residents.



City of West Chicago



City of West Chicago

LOCAL AND REGIONAL FOODS



Policies

- Explore the existing market of local and regional food production and distribution, including local and regional artisans, makers, and entrepreneurs, to be able to leverage access to these producers for West Chicago residents.
- Demonstrate support for an emerging local and regional foods system.
- Improve access to locally and regionally produced foods as a healthy choice and as a community-building opportunity.
- Implement economic development strategies to support grocers and food outlets in sourcing from local and regional growers and producers.
- Promote a local and regional food economy in West Chicago by connecting and leveraging the City's land, entrepreneurs, and community organizations. The creation of a local farmers' market with local and regional vendors can support this effort.
- Adopt ordinances in support of urban agriculture and composting. Every few years, review and update existing ones on sustainable and native landscaping as needed.
- Support and facilitate existing efforts for a Downtown West Chicago farmers' market or initiate a City-sponsored one (such as ease permitting restrictions, coordinate use of public spaces or traffic

measures, and promote use of City logos and branding).

Implementation Strategies

- Inventory underused areas (such as vacant lots, parkways, and utility and transportation sector rights-of-way) for repurposing (such as mobile retail, farmers' market, and community gardens).
- Identify existing growers, makers, and microbusinesses that could benefit from being connected to a West Chicago local and regional foods network.
- Consider the feasibility of the broad variety of local strategies and model ordinances developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning in its *Municipal Strategies to Support Local Food Systems*.
- Develop a branding and loyalty initiative that recognizes and promotes local and regional small producers and retail outlets, which often are not members of local chambers of commerce. Invite local and regional makers and retail outlets or service providers to participate.
- Support existing community markets that serve residents in need. Engage in information sharing with partners about populations in need to ensure that all West Chicagoans can access resources.

SPOTLIGHT

DOWNTOWN FARMERS' AND ARTISANS' MARKET

West Chicagoans would love to see gathering places for eating, shopping, and spending time with neighbors. A Downtown farmers' market, art market, boxcar market, or other regular event will bring people together. Possible locations include Turner Court and adjacent parking lots, near the site of the 1869 Depot, and the ample sidewalks along both sides of Galena Street, from Tye Court to Main Street. Markets like this are a big part of Mexican and other international cultures—in Spanish, these events *al aire libre* are sometimes known as *tianguis* (tee-AHN-geese). But they are also fun for everyone. Here's what they look like in some other places.



Gloria Casas, Courier-News

The Milk Pail-El Gran Paseo is a popular outdoor food and flea market (known as the *tianguis*) in unincorporated Kane County, near Dundee, that welcomes thousands of Latinos from across the region every weekend from April to October.



Eddie Quiñones for Chicago Reader

In Bridgeview, the Thai Illinois Chamber of Commerce sponsors a weekly market that attracts small and micro vendors from the region and out of state.



Village of Lisle

West Chicago's nearby neighbors Geneva, Glen Ellyn, Lisle, Western Springs, and Wheaton are home to weekend farmers' and art markets facilitated by the same public market operator, which invites local vendors and makers to participate.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

West Chicago is a diverse community of hardworking individuals and families who give back to their neighbors and community. Pride in these values and the history and distinct City character is strong. When the City showcases community pride, leverages cultural assets, and celebrates diversity, it recognizes and values the contributions of all those who call West Chicago home. When people of all ages feel welcome and seen, they are more likely to participate broadly across all areas of City life.

Using many platforms to communicate with residents and partners about City information and services makes it easier for residents to be informed and participate. Increased civic participation leads to more informed residents, making it easier for the City to reach residents, too. Increased civic participation also builds community and facilitates social trust. It is mutually beneficial for the City and residents because it increases volunteerism, voter participation, local pride, and more.

MAINTAINING HOMETOWN PRIDE

Policies

- Focus resources and attention on the Downtown, and continue promoting and encouraging events and activities that drive Downtown activation, such as community art and garden projects, historical awareness, temporary use of spaces for special events and other activities, and adaptive reuse of historical buildings.
- Focus special events sponsored and co-sponsored by the City in the Downtown, to drive activation.
- Encourage community-led activities, pop-ups, and special events that bring neighbors together and explicitly welcome all West Chicagoans to participate.
- Evaluate and clarify ways that the City can support community-led projects, including the City's internal processes and requirements for special events permitting.
- Ensure that City-sponsored special events adapt and evolve in line with resident interests and feedback.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop, promote, and mark self-guided walks or routes through West Chicago for residents and visitors. These can have a focus on history, art, culture, food, or nature.
- Publicize existing online guides or checklists for residents and other stakeholders on requirements for organizing and holding special events, and ensure that guides are user-friendly.
- Review and determine where the City may be able to ease permitting, capacity, and other requirements for community-led special events, pop-ups, and other temporary installations to encourage small-scale, community-led activities and events.
- Work with Fire Protection District and Police Department personnel to evaluate and update existing capacity requirements and other compliance issues for outdoor special events.
- Coordinate or sponsor a semi-annual or annual day of City-wide community service to bring neighbors and community members together.
- Increase the sale of branded West Chicago merchandise (such as coffee cups and T-shirts) that appeals to a wide variety of West Chicago residents and visitors. Build on-the-street recognition and pride while enhancing the City Museum's small revenue stream.

- Partner with local businesses to create a weekly or biweekly “Showcase Night Out” with food vendors and local music to bring residents Downtown.
- Continue to partner with local schools and organizations to showcase youth art, music, and other cultural activities across the City in City-owned or City-accessible spaces.
- Provide brief surveys to residents to evaluate existing events and determine new ones that appeal to community members’ interests.



COMMUNITY DIVERSITY

Policies

- Build on West Chicago's enormous asset of community diversity to cultivate a widely recognized environment of welcoming, access, and trust for all.
- Demonstrate commitment to diversity and cultural awareness across all City Departments, and help promote connections and partnerships that leverage resources and involvement of the City's diverse population.
- Encourage civic participation and leadership that is reflective of West Chicago's population, including young people.
- Promote West Chicago regionally as home to one of the largest Mexican American communities in Chicagoland.
- Celebrate and promote West Chicago's many cultural opportunities and assets in all official decisions, policies, and programming.
- Focus on West Chicago's diverse personal and institutional narratives in all City communications (such as spotlights on personal stories and experiences) to increase awareness and build bridges.

- Encourage community-led activities, pop-ups, and special events that bring neighbors together and explicitly welcome all West Chicagoans to participate.
- Prioritize public spaces (such as Downtown and parks) that create youth-friendly gathering spaces to promote welcoming young people into West Chicago's public spaces and civic life.

Implementation Strategies

- Adopt a "welcoming city" ordinance for the City of West Chicago to recognize the legal rights and contributions of all West Chicagoans.
- Adopt a City of West Chicago Statement on Inclusion and Diversity.
- Encourage City of West Chicago staff and leaders, as well as partner government agencies and other stakeholders, to increase cultural awareness by attending immersive, informational programming or special events on culture, history, and diverse populations in West Chicago.
- Partner with and support Mexican American cultural organizations (such as Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois/Casa Michoacán's June festival month) to expand and promote communications and cross-cultural partnerships (such as sister cities, business alliances, and local official training), programming, and other opportunities.
- Partner with local organizations to celebrate diversity and participate in events such as traditional December posadas (holiday parties), which provide a good opportunity for open houses and reaching residents in other ways.
- Continue to focus resources on supporting organizers and expanding capacity and communications around the September Mexican Independence Day celebrations held in West Chicago.
- Explore the possibility of an additional sister cities exchange relationship, particularly one in Mexico, and other cultural festivals or pop-ups that pertain to all of West Chicago's diversity.
- Consult with youth and youth-serving organizations about ways to reach young people successfully through different communication channels in order to publicize programs, initiatives, and partnerships that invite West Chicago youth to serve the City, volunteer, learn about City government, and actively participate.

- Invite youth to a participatory social media strategy for the City that showcases youth voices on social media. For example, launch of a Snapchat campaign and filter, youth-produced YouTube videos, photography contests on Instagram, or a TikTok challenge or video campaign.
- Encourage block parties and other resident-led events to promote community and build bridges between neighbors.
- Implement spotlight features across all communications platforms that present personal narratives and expertise of a wide variety of West Chicago residents.

SPOTLIGHT

DECLARING A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

“Welcoming city” ordinances and commitments to diversity are officially adopted statements recognizing the legal rights of all immigrants and also a City’s diversity as an asset. These statements publicly value the contributions and experiences of all residents, and especially those who may not have an official immigration status.

The reality is that it’s hard to know how many community members aren’t comfortable fully participating because of fears about immigration and deportation. Welcoming ordinances can help ease some of that fear. They help increase civic participation and outreach by making all residents feel safer in using services. For example, some people may feel more comfortable visiting their child at school, calling 911 when needed, accessing public resources, or attending City-sponsored events.

Highly diverse communities that have adopted welcoming ordinances include Evanston, Berwyn, Oak Park, Bloomington, and Normal.



Daily Herald



Umiva Mator, Sanstha Chicago Midwest / Asian Media USA

COMMUNICATIONS TO BOOST ENGAGEMENT

Policies

- Communicate with West Chicago residents and other stakeholders using the broadest possible variety of methods and platforms to ensure accessibility and reach every West Chicagoan with City information, resources, and ways to participate in the City's civic and social life.
- Expand capacity and availability of all communications and resources in languages other than English.
- Maximize outreach and communication about City news, alerts, and events to residents during in-person and online special events.

Implementation Strategies

- Add capabilities for direct mail, SMS/text updates, and WhatsApp groups (used by many Spanish speakers and people of international heritage across the region).
- Increase functionality, interactivity, and intergenerational appeal of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube posts.
- Launch an official TikTok account and develop campaigns by City of West Chicago Department staff and partners to educate and entertain residents and other stakeholders.
- Aim for the effective communication of all City information and materials in Spanish, and in other languages where possible. An important way to achieve this is to work to translate all available communications; over time, the city may discover other cost-effective strategies to reach non-English-speaking audiences.
- Incorporate Spanish-language communication, engagement, and outreach efforts into communications across City Departments to enhance communications with the Latino community.
- Develop and distribute materials about serving West Chicago or volunteering in public, business, or nonprofit leadership roles.
- Develop a campaign to welcome residents to get to know City staff and roles by creating and publishing individual spotlights in social media or the newsletter.
- Create a bilingual hard-copy and online services directory that establishes City of West Chicago services, roles, and responsibilities. The directory can point residents to other partner government agencies at the City, County, and State levels (such as Park District and public schools) and help them know where to turn for particular services or supports.
- Improve existing community and events calendars for interactivity and engagement (such as incorporating graphics; at-a-glance event descriptions and highlights; essential audience information; community posting; and direct links to social media). Event information should be easily accessible and available outside of a desktop website, including through mobile phone and in person (such as a hard-copy calendar or community board available at City Hall or another public space).

INCREASED CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Policies

- Include and welcome residents of all ages into the City's policy-making processes.
- Consider ways to increase accessibility of ways to participate and be involved.
- Welcome and invite young people and their perspectives and concerns into City affairs and spaces.
- Strategically align City efforts with existing ones to provide young people with educational, recreational, and volunteer opportunities.
- Proactively increase civic participation of West Chicago's Latino and multicultural communities through demonstrated efforts to learn about the communities, engagement, and accessibility.
- Consult with schools and youth-focused organizations to find ways to increase student involvement and enthusiasm in public affairs (such as City government, community event planning, and student advisory council).

Implementation Strategies

- Ensure that meeting times and lengths are accessible to a range of residents and that Spanish interpretation is available. Make available interpretation and materials in other languages when possible.
- Establish a youth advisory council to cultivate leadership skills, improve civic participation of young people and their families, and benefit the City by hearing new perspectives and concerns.
- Seek out and support a network of volunteer West Chicago community "ambassadors" or "docents" for community information, recommendations, and tours.
- Involve youth in cultivating local pride through a program of youth-led City tours for residents and neighboring communities.
- Host an annual open house at City Hall to communicate that all West Chicago residents are welcome at City Hall. This can help clarify and educate about City services, roles, and responsibilities.
- Livestream City Council across various media platforms.



ALIGNED SERVICES

When the City builds partnerships with other government agencies and across Departments, it streamlines services for greater efficiency, saves money, and makes service delivery easier. This allows the City to have more capacity to prioritize staff time and resources. Collaboration and coordination across organizations and service providers result in creative ways to achieve a unified, trusted government presence. They also promote shared priorities.

Aligning and coordinating services increases the impact of policies through

shared priorities and resource distribution. Moreover, clearly defining the role of the City generally and the responsibilities of City Departments can contribute to knowledge building and increased civic participation. The outcomes are greater community trust, civic awareness and participation, cost savings, and relationship building through partnerships and collaboration.

Policies

- Continue to encourage collaboration and participate in alliances between government agencies, Departments, and nonprofit organizations that serve West Chicago.

- Communicate the City's roles and responsibilities to residents to clarify the City's role and responsibilities and help direct residents to appropriate resources.

Implementation Strategies

- Establish an informational app for the City of West Chicago that coordinates across City Departments. The app can directly connect residents to needed City services and resources. For maximum reach and functionality, the City should seek to partner with other government agencies to incorporate their services.



- Create and disseminate via various platforms messaging in English and Spanish to clarify the City’s services, roles, and responsibilities. Direct residents to partner government agencies at City, County, and State levels (including the Park District and public schools) for help in particular services or support.
- Publicly recognize partner government agencies (such as West Chicago Park District and West Chicago public school districts) and nonprofit organizations by sharing information and celebrating their successes and milestones in City of West Chicago communications channels. This can strengthen communications and understanding among all parties.
- Provide City staff time across Departments to participate in WeGo Together for Kids. District 33 school administrators support a broad-based network of City and County partners and organizations that serve children and families in West Chicago’s public elementary school district. Participation of City administrators and Department staff will increase awareness of pressing socioeconomic issues facing West Chicagoans, build relationships, and provide a venue for communicating about City news, services, and events for youth and families.



SPOTLIGHT

WEGO TOGETHER FOR KIDS

WeGo Together for Kids is a District 33 initiative that supports the “health, safety, learning and social-emotional well-being of children and families” who live in West Chicago. With impressively broad reach, WeGo Together unites more than 50 County and local organizations in the areas of academic achievement, youth and family health, early childhood, community engagement, economically stable families, and emergency preparedness.

West Chicago Forward’s vision of the City’s future also depends on the various aspects of well-being for youth and families. Finding additional ways to tie the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan to the work already being done in the community and efforts like WeGo Together for Kids can help guarantee the success of West Chicago Forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PLACE

The following recommendations focus on the physical aspects of West Chicago, including land, infrastructure, transportation, and natural areas.

LAND USE AND ZONING

PLACEMAKING

TRAIL-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

ADAPTIVE REUSE

HOUSING

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

LAND USE AND ZONING

The City of West Chicago has a long history of combining small-town life with progress—particularly when it comes to industry and the railroad. West Chicago’s patterns of development reflect these trends to this day. Vast natural areas, large-scale physical improvements such as the DuPage Airport, and major roads like North Avenue, Neltner Boulevard, and Roosevelt Road—all of these influence its development patterns.

The Land Use Plan in this section seeks to build on the City’s assets and existing patterns to guide decision-making for future development and redevelopment. West Chicago is a nearly built-out, mature City. Because of that, strategic decisions for infill development and redevelopment are the clearest way to achieve the vision and goals of this Plan.

Specifically, the Land Use Plan in this section does the following:

- clarifies opportunities for desired growth and change;
- aligns resources toward Downtown;
- maintains and enhances the character and charm of existing neighborhoods;

- strengthens industrial areas and job centers; and
- connects open spaces and recreational amenities to residents and economic development.

Land use and zoning are complementary ideas, but there are essential differences between the two. Land use refers to the use or intended use of a particular property. Zoning is the regulatory tool to permit and enforce that use. Appreciating the differences between them and how they interact and work together provides people interested in change with precise language to describe opportunities and constraints.

As West Chicago expanded from its railroad-centered origin, land use and development patterns took on many forms. There are intact residential neighborhoods, both historical and new, throughout the City. The DuPage Airport at the City’s western edge influences the attraction and retention of nearby businesses. Commercial corridors, which are notable for developing along major streets and being oriented to drivers, exist along North Avenue, Neltner Boulevard, and Roosevelt Road.

As West Chicago plans for its future, it is essential to consider where to expect certain land uses to remain in place and where to encourage change.

Zoning historically has been used to strictly separate types of land use, and with good

reason. Some industrial and commercial uses have a detrimental impact on residential uses. Over the past 20 years, though, thoughts around zoning have changed. Strict separation is perhaps not as urgent as it was before. Today there is more emphasis on design and compatibility than on use alone.

Zoning is among the most powerful tools available for implementing the vision and goals of West Chicago Forward. The City’s current Zoning Ordinance contains 14 distinct zoning districts, eight of which are residential. Because the City is nearly built out, revisions to the Zoning Ordinance will make its use easier for property owners and developers as well as City staff and decision makers.

This Land Use Plan offers policy guidance and recommendations that reflect West Chicago’s past, present, and future to achieve and maintain a livable and functional City. It also describes the intended uses of land in West Chicago.

The following sections include future land use categories and recommendations for zoning and policy changes to best implement the Land Use Plan. All recommendations come from existing conditions, past planning efforts, and community engagement during the West Chicago Forward planning process.

DOWNTOWN

Downtowns are special places. West Chicago's Downtown developed around railroad access, and the City's Downtown still has a small-town character in its retail and service uses. Downtown should continue to be the principal gathering place for West Chicago. The City should expand permitted uses there, use Downtown to focus on community events, and aggressively attract, retain, and expand businesses there. Downtown should be a mixed-use area that includes residential uses in addition to goods and services that appeal to residents and visitors.

Policies

- Downtown should include residential, civic, office, services, and retail uses.
- Downtown should be easy to walk and bike to and through with trails and walkways.
- As properties redevelop, encourage the highest residential densities within walking distance of the Metra Station.
- Incorporate open spaces Downtown for passive and active recreation for all ages.
- Create policies, programs, and events that reinforce Downtown as the heart of West Chicago.

Implementation Strategies

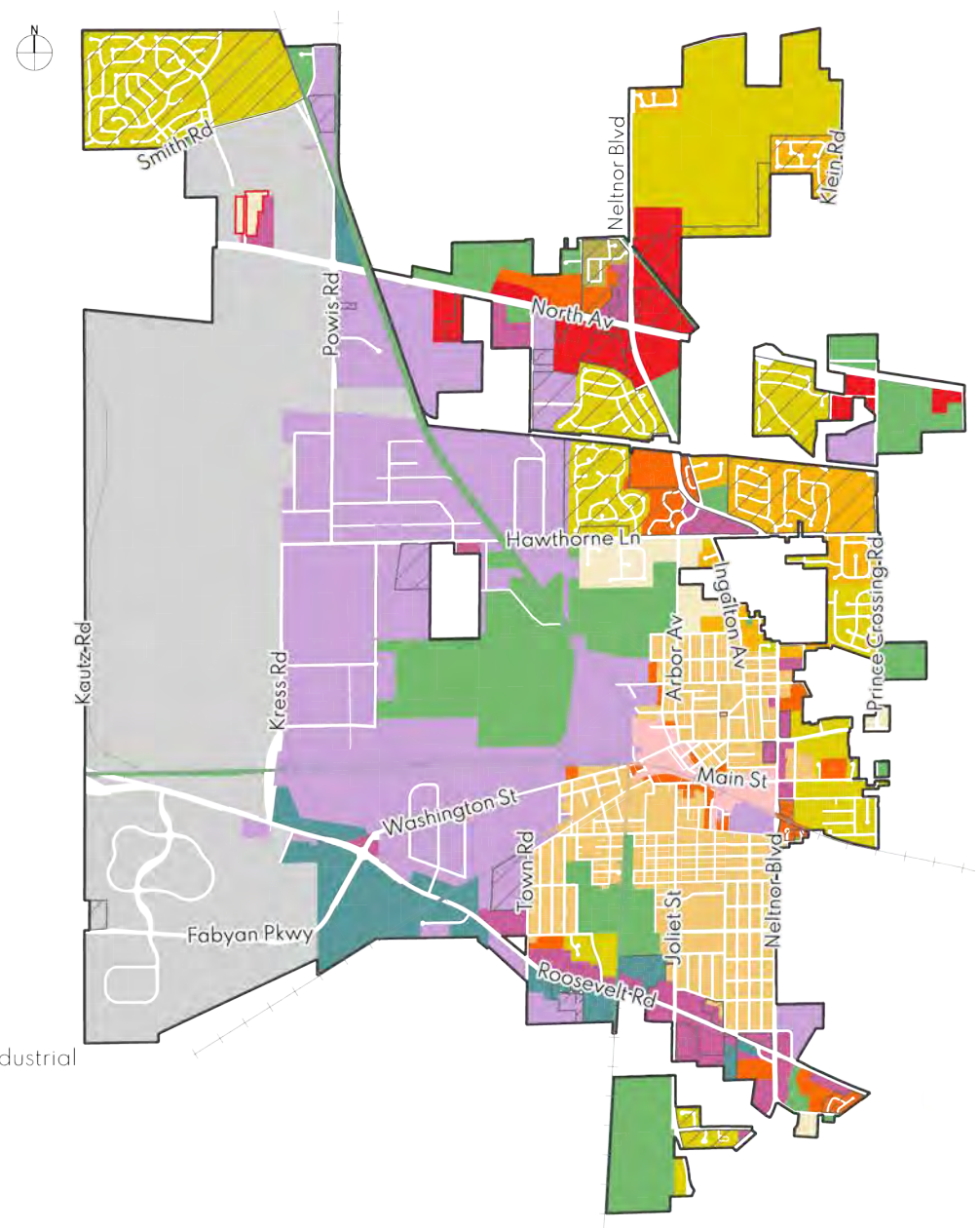
- Determine the best sites for small-scale infill development and redevelopment.
- Expand the list of permitted uses in the B-1 Central Business District to accommodate broader services, entertainment, and residential uses.
- Revisit bulk requirements in the B-1 District to allow for greater height, density, and intensity.
- Continue to implement recommendations and updates to the Central–Main Street Redevelopment Plan.
- Expand mobile vendors as a permitted use beyond the M District to all B Districts.



2021 Zoning Districts

Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  R-1 Single-Family Residential |  B-1 Central Business |
|  R-2 Single-Family Residential |  B-2 General Business |
|  R-3 Single-Family Residential |  B-3 Regional Shopping |
|  R-4 Single-Family Residential |  M Manufacturing |
|  R-5 Single-Family Residential |  ORI Office, Research, Light Industrial |
|  R-6 Multi-Family Residential |  A Airport |
|  ER-1 Estate Residential |  Elm Road Overlay District |
|  PUD Planned Unit Development | |



SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

More than 40% of land in the City is zoned single-family residential. Single-family residential areas include primarily single-family homes but may include low-density duplexes, attached single-family homes, and neighborhood services.

In established neighborhoods, this land use is not likely to change. The Land Use Plan identifies these areas to preserve and protect these neighborhoods. However, there is an opportunity in single-family areas to encourage “gentle density” by revising the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a greater diversity of uses and housing types compatible with intact single-family neighborhoods.



Policies

- In established neighborhoods, maintain the existing character and development pattern.
- Ensure that the City maintains a diversity of housing types to attract and retain residents at all stages of life.
- Ensure that new development is compatible with existing residential neighborhoods, including density, access, and buffering of any negative impacts.
- Ensure that new development considers connections on foot and by bike for residents of all ages.
- Ensure that single-family residential areas provide easy access to parks and open spaces.



















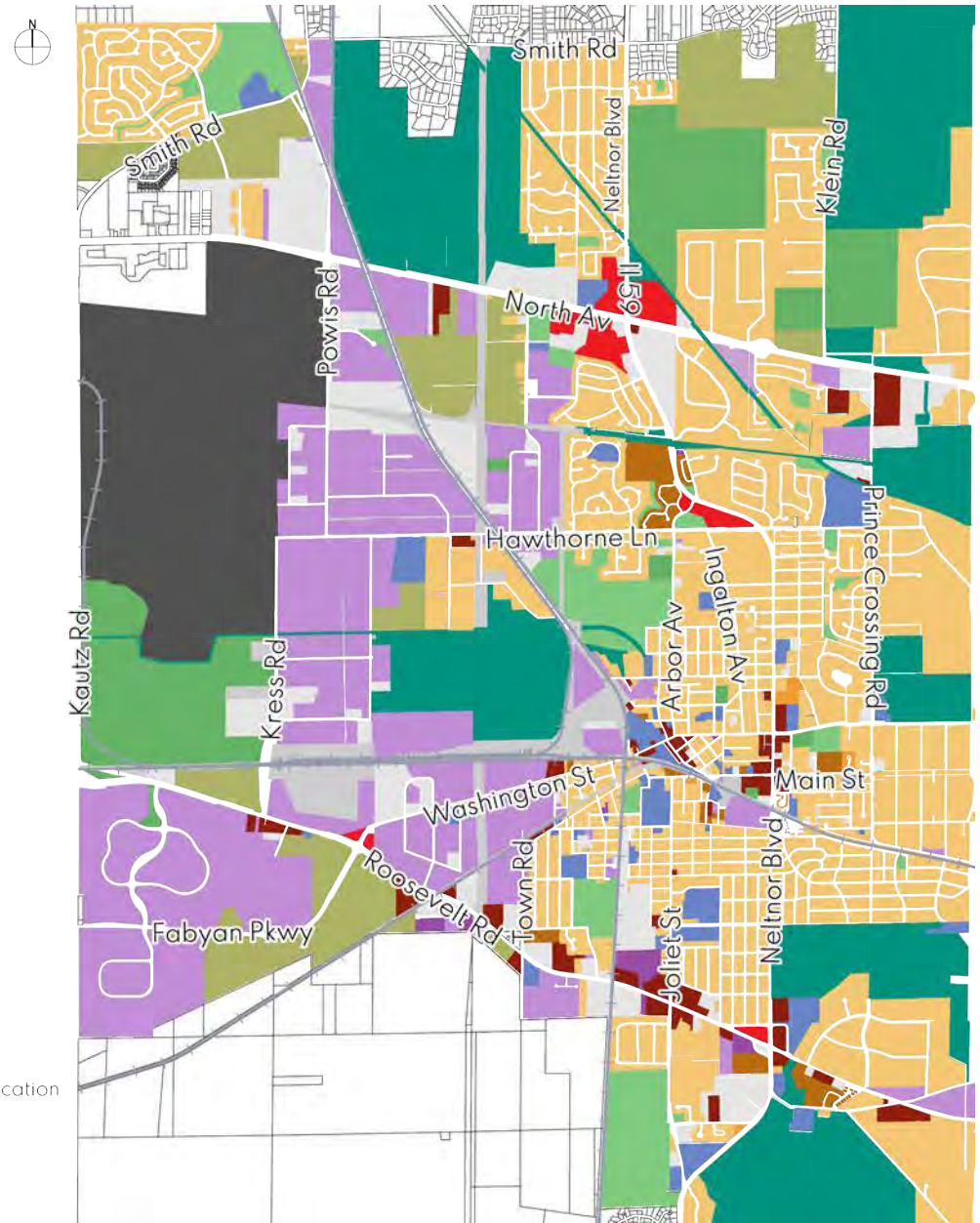
Implementation Strategies

- Consider regulating residential zoning by form rather than use and density for future updates to the Zoning Ordinance. This will help achieve a diversity of housing that maintains the established neighborhood character.
- Review the Zoning Ordinance for opportunities to simplify the development process and make it easier to administer. This includes whether bulk requirements (such as minimum lot width) that currently vary in residential districts can be made consistent.
- Consider appropriate zoning districts for accessory dwelling units.
- Consider reducing the minimum lot area per dwelling to accommodate a greater variety of housing types.
- Consider expanding the list of permitted uses in single-family zoning districts to include compatible uses beyond detached, single-family homes. Examples may include allowing multi-family properties compatible with the scale and character of existing neighborhoods, and supportive services such as daycares, particularly in the R-5 District.

Current Land Use

Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Institutional |  Agriculture |
|  Industrial |  Local Open Space |
|  Office |  Other Open Space |
|  Regional Commercial |  Regional Open Space |
|  Local Commercial |  Vacant |
|  Single-Family Residential |  Transportation/Communication |
|  Multi-Family Residential (medium density) |  DuPage Airport |
|  Multi-Family Residential (high density) |  Municipal Boundary |



MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

Multi-family residential areas are predominantly on the City's north and east sides. Compared with single-family residential districts, they account for a small percentage of the City's total residential areas.

A range of densities and forms characterize multi-family residential areas, including duplexes, attached housing, multi-unit buildings, and large multi-unit developments. Multi-family areas should include or provide easy connections to goods and services.

Policies

- Ensure that the City maintains a diversity of housing types to attract and retain people at all stages of life.
- Ensure that new development is compatible with existing residential neighborhoods, including density, access, and buffering of any negative impacts.
- Ensure that new development considers connections on foot and by bike for residents of all ages.
- Ensure that multi-family residential areas provide easy access to parks and open spaces.

Implementation Strategies

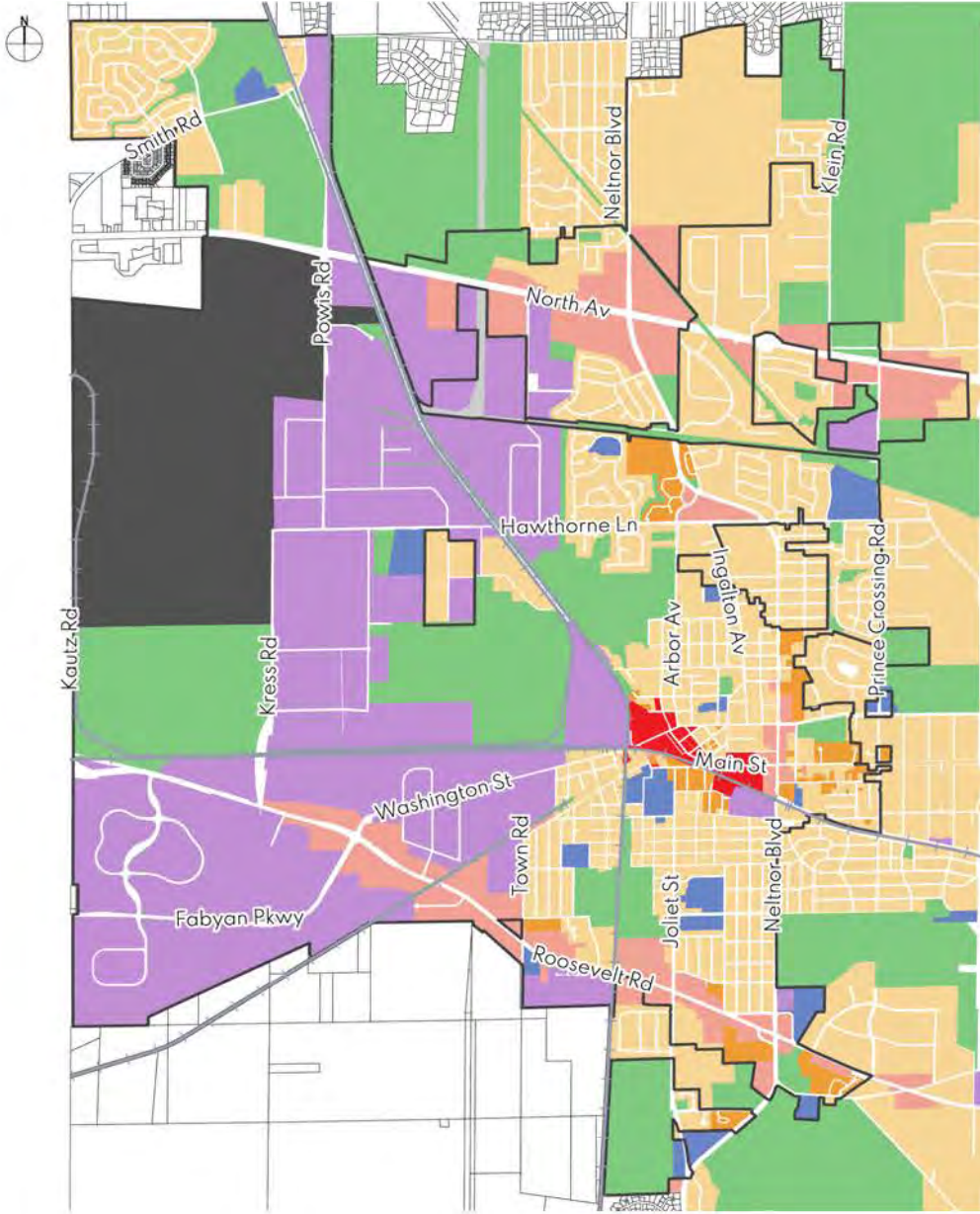
- Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a greater variety of multi-family uses in commercial districts as permitted uses.
- Reduce the minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet in the R-6 District to allow for more variety in multi-family housing types.
- Reduce the front-yard requirements in the R-6 District to reinforce walkable, compact development.
- Allow for greater maximum lot coverage in the R-6 District, detailed in the Central–Main Street Redevelopment Plan, to allow more walkable, compact development near Downtown.
- Improve connections to outlying apartment complexes (such as Aspen Ridge Apartments, Towne & Country Apartments, and Timber Lake Apartments).



Future Land Use

Legend

- Parks and Open Space
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Institutional
- Industrial
- Corridor Commercial
- Downtown
- DuPage Airport
- Municipal Boundary



CORRIDOR COMMERCIAL

West Chicago's commercial streets are well established, especially along North Avenue, Neltnor Boulevard, and Roosevelt Road. Commercial corridors provide convenience and offer a variety of goods and services, and most consumers arrive by automobile. The development pattern involves larger-scale uses that may stand alone or be part of a multi-tenant building.

Policies

- Continue to provide a range of goods and services in commercial corridor areas, including opportunities for residential development.
- As redevelopment opportunities arise, cluster retail development near key intersections:
 - Roosevelt Road (Central Manufacturing District)
 - Neltnor Boulevard at Roosevelt Road, Washington Street, and North Avenue
 - Neltnor Boulevard between Hawthorne Lane and Arbor Avenue.
- Consolidate curb cuts and access points for new development and redevelopment where possible.
- Ensure that cross-access agreements (combined entry and exit points) are in place to improve circulation.

- Promote the use of shared parking areas and agreements to reduce the amount of land dedicated to surface parking and offer convenience to shoppers and visitors.

Implementation Strategies

- Expand mobile vendors as a permitted use beyond the M District to all B districts.
- Consider reducing the minimum lot area for the B-2 District to encourage smaller, more incremental redevelopment.

- Consider reducing the minimum lot area for nursing homes and senior housing to allow greater housing diversity as residents "age in place." Aging in place refers to seniors' ability to live independently in their own home and community.
- Consider reducing parking requirements to ensure compatibility with land use and housing affordability goals. For example, ratios for restaurants (10 spaces per 1,000 square feet) and residential uses (2 spaces per unit) may not align with current market trends. This may inadvertently drive up development costs.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

The quality of parks and open spaces distinguishes West Chicago. The Zoning Ordinance and future development patterns should reflect that distinction. A new Parks and Open Space Zoning District will clarify the current and intended use of these parcels. The new designation should include publicly and privately owned spaces for passive and active recreation.

Policies

- Support and expand partnerships (such as DuPage Forest Preserve District and West Chicago Park District) to provide environmental education, stewardship, and outdoor recreation programming.
- Improve connectivity between forest preserves and West Chicago neighborhoods (such as improved wayfinding, signage, access points, marketing, and outreach).
- Create small-scale “parklets” in neighborhoods and Downtown by activating underused spaces.
- Consider water quality and ecological health when making decisions that will impact future development type, pattern, and intensity.
- Increase density in already-developed areas to preserve and expand opportunities to create open space.

Implementation Strategies

- Create a Parks and Open Space Zoning District and include permitted and special uses in the District that help activate spaces and support overall economic development.
- Expand mobile vendors as a permitted use in the newly created Parks and Open Space District.
- Create an inventory of sites for temporary activations of open space and pilot programs. This is a cost-effective way to assess long-term opportunities for permanent improvements.
- Ensure that regular Planned Unit Development reviews encourage and incentivize the provision of public open space over the long term, whether publicly or privately owned.
- Expand the City’s green infrastructure network consistent with principles of low-impact development: incorporating vegetation, soils, and engineered solutions (such as bioswales and stormwater curb extensions) to mimic natural processes.
- Consider developing a Green Infrastructure Plan to inform capital projects, development efforts, land use regulations, and public works activities.



INDUSTRIAL

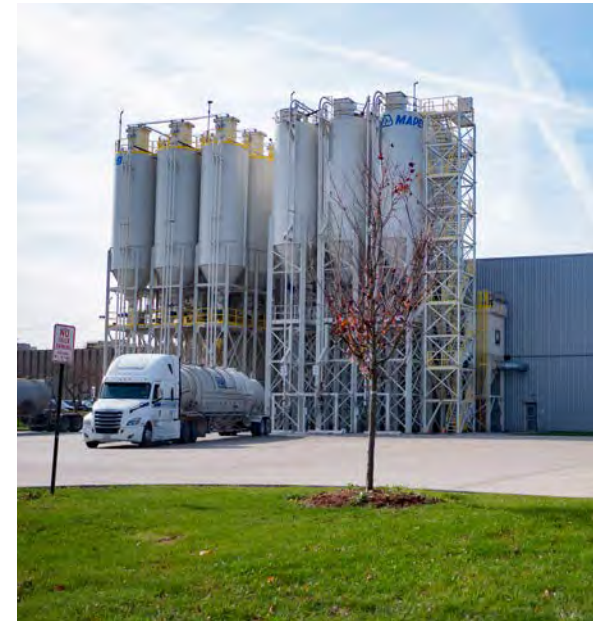
As large-scale economic trends continue to influence ideas about industrial uses and development, flexibility is critical. Industrial areas and employment centers may include offices, logistics facilities, and manufacturing. They are destinations for employees from outside municipal limits, customers, and delivery trucks. Industrial areas should include compatible uses and services to support businesses and employees. These may include childcare centers, restaurants, and recreational activities.

Policies

- Maintain the integrity of industrial areas by limiting uses compatible with industrial, logistics, and office uses.
- Ensure that cross-access agreements (combined entry and exit points) are in place to provide improved circulation.
- Promote the use of shared parking areas and agreements to reduce the amount of land dedicated to surface parking and offer convenience.
- Coordinate public-sector infrastructure investments to maintain high-quality and functional industrial areas.

Implementation Strategies

- Combine the Manufacturing and ORI (Office/Research/Light Industrial) Zoning Districts into a single, comprehensive district focusing on employment and improved truck circulation.
- Expand permitted uses to include workforce-supportive service and retail (such as childcare and fitness centers).
- Expand permitted uses to encourage incubation of emerging businesses.
- Continue to work with DuPage County and the Illinois Department of Transportation to coordinate improvements and improve vehicle circulation.



MUSE Community + Design



Chong L. Antioch Garden Club

AIRPORT

DuPage Airport is an important driver of economic development, and the DuPage Airport Authority is an important partner in the future success of West Chicago. The airport itself—the field and hangars—require special care, including Federal Aviation Administration requirements. The Airport Land Use and Zoning District should continue providing these protections, clarifying regulations and policies that support the airport, and allowing complementary businesses to continue locating nearby.

Policies

- Maintain strong ties with the DuPage Airport Authority. Review Airport Master Plan Recommendations, when available, to determine the feasibility of incorporating them into future planning efforts.
- Ensure that the transportation network supports evolving airport needs.

Implementation Strategy

- Review permitted uses in the Airport and ORI (Office/Research/Light Industrial) Zoning Districts to better capitalize on commercial development opportunities and airport-supportive uses.



PLACEMAKING

Placemaking bundles strategies to activate public spaces in ways that reflect community identity and invite community participation. Downtown West Chicago is a canvas for additional exciting, colorful, beautiful, participatory spaces that attract and inspire residents and visitors.

Placemaking is fun and interactive. It encourages residents to see familiar spaces in new ways. It can bring neighbors together. Existing unique assets like the Turner Court streetscape or the wide sidewalks of Main Street offer plentiful placemaking opportunities.

Placemaking furthers local pride, economic development and growth, and private investment. It also improves public health and public safety, and it can encourage residents to participate in conversations about how to use public spaces. A willingness to encourage new ideas and try out new programs and ways of implementing projects will reverberate throughout the City and broadly promote West Chicago as the place its residents already know and love.

Policies

- Celebrate West Chicago's diversity by creating opportunities for neighborhood gateways, public art, murals, sculptures, and artistic exhibitions.
- Continue and expand efforts to beautify Downtown West Chicago.
- Encourage residents to take a fresh look at their neighborhoods and contribute ways to activate them and invite in residents and visitors.
- Encourage and invite temporary placemaking activities focused on gathering people together, such as farmers' or pop-up markets, installations or programming, events, festivals, sports, and outdoor activities, to increase the number of people Downtown and support the local economy.
- Maximize "rewarding" walking and biking experiences Downtown (such as arts, destinations, visual interest, farmers' markets, and other events).
- Celebrate community pride and partnerships in the arts to spur additional development and investment.
- Promote Downtown as the primary events space to contribute to and build Downtown's character.
- Identify, encourage, and promote spaces specifically for or designed by youth.

Implementation Strategies

- Communicate through City messaging, branding, and other communications that Downtown West Chicago is a multi-use destination.
- Programs such as Plant Trees for Communities and streetscaping at the Woman's Christian Temperance Union fountain created inviting spaces. New efforts can identify major corridors to improve community-informed streetscaping, branding, wayfinding signage, lighting, and other infrastructure improvements following City and Illinois Department of Transportation guidelines.
- Identify City-owned properties Downtown for art showcases or murals and connect with local artists and others to activate.
- Support restaurants' and other vendors' outdoor offerings during three or four seasons. Provide incentives for local restaurants, such as funding to cover expenses associated with outdoor dining.
- Consider a weekly event like "Food Truck Night," for food trucks from around the region to set up Downtown. Determine other potential times and locations for food trucks to gather.
- Provide brief surveys to residents to evaluate existing events and determine new ones that appeal to community members' interests.

- To ensure successful mobile vending, consider instating permitting and licensing fees, requiring a DuPage County Health Department Annual Mobile Food Vendor Permit, exempting individual vendors (such as popsicle or produce vendors), or limiting times and days of permitted vending.
- Maximize special events programming by permitting additional one-day or weekend-long events (such as an art or music festival).
- Activate spaces near Turner Court as oriented toward youth especially (but welcoming to all) in a way that harnesses young people's creativity and is safe for businesses, skateboarders, cars, and others.
- Identify indoor and outdoor public market locations to stimulate the local economy, improve the built environment, and encourage new developers to provide a holistic approach to public spaces for the community to enjoy safe and healthy outdoor activities.
- Continue to support Downtown transit-oriented development (TOD) by collaborating with Metra and other transportation agencies and property owners to maximize available real estate, including parking lots owned by the City and the Regional Transportation Authority.

SPOTLIGHT

Top: Teens in Portage, Wisconsin, organized to create a skatepark in vacant spaces in the city's downtown area.

Bottom: Bolingbrook's Indian Boundary Skatepark invites kids of all ages on boards and bikes.

TEENS TAKE OVER

The parking lots and grassy areas between the West Chicago Metra Station and Washington Street prohibit biking, skateboarding, and scooters. Even with Reed-Keppler Park's ample skatepark, the City can explore partnerships to close off these spaces occasionally to accommodate different kids of youth-friendly physical activity. This will help activate Turner Court by bringing young people and families with children into the area.

Some West Chicago parents indicated a need for youth activities. Events Downtown could increase participation and use of amenities and parks in other parts of the City. They provide spaces to educate young people about pedestrian, biking, and traffic safety. And they can go a long way toward making everyone feel welcome in Downtown spaces.



Jen McCoy / Portage Daily Register



Bolingbrook Park District

SPOTLIGHT

FOR THE 'GRAM

Downtown West Chicago has many spaces with the potential to come alive with color and go “viral” on social media. Many placemaking strategies are relatively inexpensive and straightforward—and the whole community can get involved in bringing them to life:

- Murals
- Spray-chalk walking tours and bike lanes
- Pop-up small parks with activities
- Public art
- Street surface treatments like dots and other art
- Temporary crosswalks
- Art-inspired signage for the Downtown tunnel
- Community-tended planters and gardens
- Scavenger hunts via QR code

Top: A ping-pong table in an underused space in Chicago's Boxville at 51st Street invites people to spend more time in the colorful neighborhood space.

Middle: Inauguration of a mural created by 20 local youth in Bloomington, Illinois.

Bottom: Mundelein's Fremont Public Library held a chalk art contest on public sidewalks for local teens.



SPOTLIGHT



Aurora Downtown



Visit Sheboygan



Village of Lake Zurich

Top: Aurora shifted its Food Truck Friday events to a monthly food truck gathering in the downtown area.

Middle: Vollrath Park in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, hosts Food Truck Mondays, where residents purchase food and bring lawn chairs and games to spend time with family and neighbors.

Bottom: Lake Zurich hosts “Block a Food” food-truck socials on Wednesdays through summer and fall that attract 200–300 people each week. The village also promotes fixed-address eateries as part of its events promotions.

FOOD TRUCK NIGHTS

People love food trucks because they’re a fun and affordable way to try new flavors from around the world and to meet with friends and family. Monthly “food truck nights” in City-owned parking lots can create a festive atmosphere and excitement about Downtown West Chicago. The City’s existing contacts through West Chicago Food Festival can help make this a reality. Historic Turner Court is an ideal backdrop for showing off West Chicago’s assets to residents and on social media.

TRAIL-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

Trail-oriented development draws on ideas of active transportation, transit-oriented development, and “trail towns.” The key ingredients of a trail town are having a robust local business district, supporting thriving local businesses, developing real estate, and finding funding.

One of West Chicago’s greatest assets is its access to trails and green space, including the Prairie Path and other regional trails. The City can position itself as a hub of recreational activity, trails, and trail-oriented retail and services in DuPage County and the western suburbs. The City can also draw on existing strategies such as promoting transit-oriented development and mixed-use development to support this.

Activating trails and Prairie Path access in Downtown West Chicago also goes a long way toward stimulating Downtown activity and gatherings, and other key recommendations of West Chicago Forward.

Policies

- Collaborate with local entities, small business owners, real estate agencies, local organizations, financial entities, chambers of commerce, and interest groups to develop a recreational multi-use destination that will attract new investment and provide the community with high-quality open space.
- Plan new development, programs, and events to highlight the West Chicago portion of Illinois Prairie Path’s Geneva Spur as a must-stop destination for trail users.
- Promote the Downtown Retail and Restaurant Business Grant Program locally and regionally to attract businesses and restaurants to trail-side and Downtown locations.
- Develop local bike/walk connections through infrastructure, public amenities, and wayfinding in Downtown West Chicago to attract other uses and visitors.
- Program and build partnerships around trail events, such as local races, 5K walk/runs, and nature or history walks.
- Coordinate West Chicago’s local bikeway and trail improvements with regional improvements to improve overall connectivity and access.
- Collaborate with local and regional partners to ensure safety and enhance the built environment for the community.

Partners may include the West Chicago Park District, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, SCARCE (an environmental education nonprofit in DuPage County), Openlands (a regional conservation organization), and others.

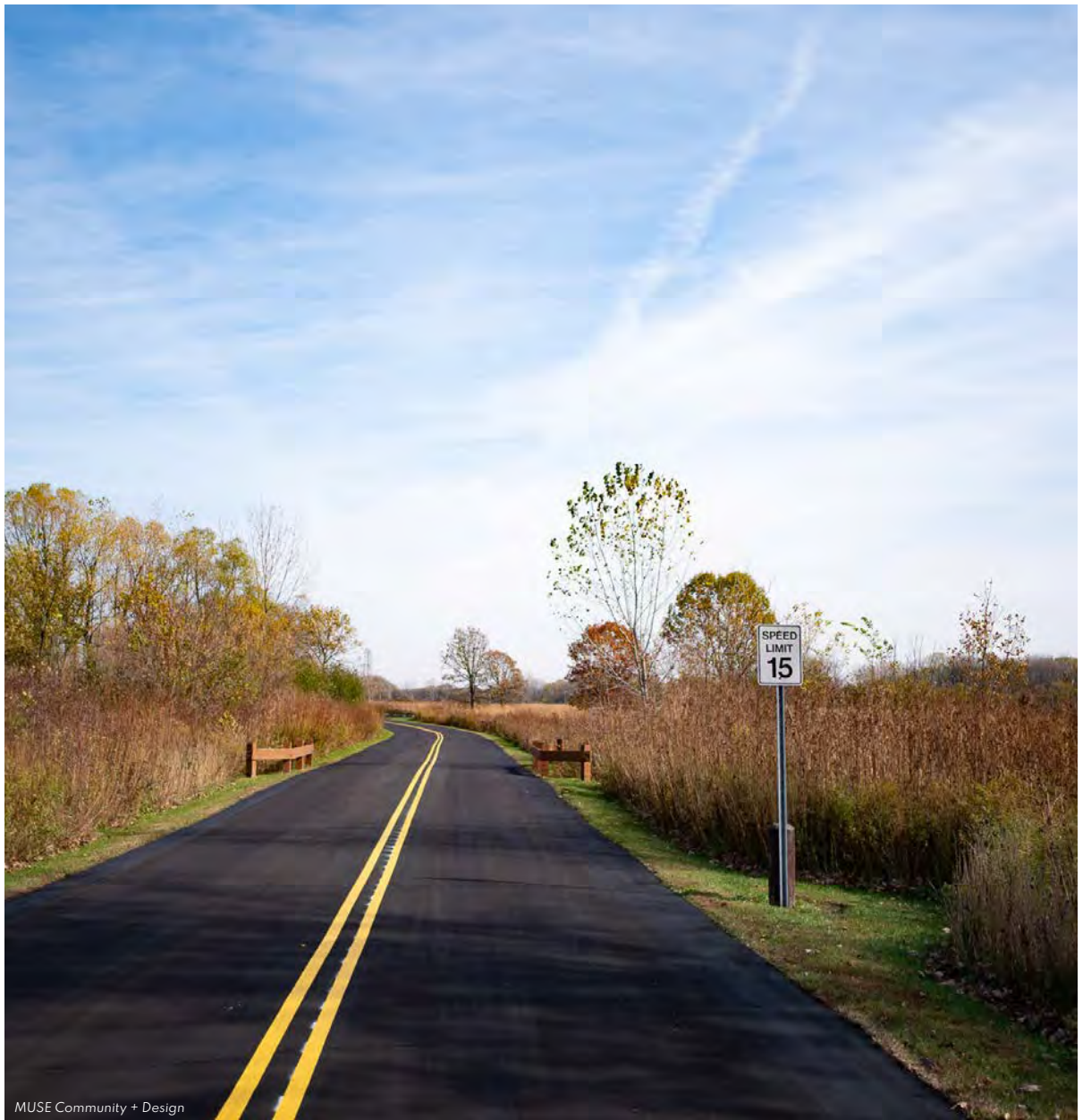
- Develop a combined transit- and trail-oriented development strategy.
- Develop amenities to attract and support trail users (such as outdoor furniture, shaded rest stops, and water refills).
- Promote West Chicago as a premier destination for DuPage County trail users, bike riders, and nature lovers, and as an ideal trailhead (starting and ending point) for trail access.



Antero Group



MUSE Community + Design



MUSE Community + Design

Implementation Strategies

- Partner with DuPage County and the Illinois Department of Transportation to improve or incorporate bike and pedestrian facilities into forthcoming infrastructure projects.
- Work with the DuPage County Division of Transportation to complete the following proposed regional trails and local bikeways projects:
 - DuPage Technology Corridor Trail
 - West Branch DuPage River Trail
 - Great Western Trail Extension
 - Local bikeway projects (Winfield Road, Jewell Road, Prince Crossing Road, Main Street, Blair/Factory/Joliet Streets, and Kautz Road)
- Determine new potential locations to improve and extend existing trails, trail-oriented businesses and services, and rest stops and access points. Amenities may include wayfinding for West Chicago destinations and businesses, separate Prairie Path bike and pedestrian lanes through Turner Court, support for trail extensions, and promotion of other regional trails such as the DuPage River Trail and Fox River Trail.
- Use bikeway signage and wayfinding as well as pavement treatments to enhance trail users' safety and comfort between Wilson Avenue and Prince Crossing Road.
- The Illinois Prairie Path's Geneva Spur crosses Prince Crossing Road immediately south of Main Street, which has no traffic signal. Prince Crossing Road is a county road and federal-aid-eligible road (FAU 2536). Possible crossing improvements include high-visibility crosswalks, advanced warning signs, actuated warning beacons, and signals. The City will need to coordinate the design and construction of any improvements with the DuPage County Division of Transportation.
- Both Illinois Prairie Path spurs cross Neltnor Boulevard, a busy arterial and truck route under Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) jurisdiction. While IDOT's jurisdiction introduces additional design constraints and review requirements, it is possible to implement well-designed bike and pedestrian facilities. Any improvements will need to align with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and IDOT's guidelines and regulations (such as Bureau of Design and Environment Manual, or IDOT Local Roads and Streets Manual).
- Incentivize and encourage efforts by the local and regional business community to open a family-friendly restaurant or craft brewery or brew pub in Downtown West Chicago. If possible, the brewery should be near the Prairie Path to support maximum economic benefit for Downtown West Chicago.
- Coordinate annual bike events and walking tours with various local and regional partners to encourage community engagement and participation around improving walkability and bicycle infrastructure throughout the City.
- Develop a sidewalk and bicycle network to connect and improve access to parks, outdoor spaces, and recreational facilities. For example, complete sidewalks around the West Chicago Prairie or locally designated "rail trails" near the Union Pacific-West, Metra, and Canadian National rights-of-way.

SPOTLIGHT

Top: A train depot on Missouri's Katy Trail was retrofitted with bathrooms, benches, and a bike repair station for trail users.

Middle: The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning is providing corridor planning support along the Prairie Path as part of its Local Technical Assistance programming to the villages of Hillside and Berkeley.

Bottom: A historic train depot in south suburban Flossmoor was adapted by a restaurant and brew pub that offers community programming.



RIDING THE TRAILS

The 61-mile Prairie Path was the first successful rails-to-trails conversion in North America. Today it connects users to scenic trails across the region. The Prairie Path's Geneva Spur runs right through Downtown West Chicago, and the Elgin Spur runs through the north portion of the City as well. Trail users enjoy scenic natural views, arrive at Downtown West Chicago restaurants and businesses in under 30 minutes from the trailhead in Wheaton, and connect to communities on the Fox River and the Fox River Trail in less than an hour.

West Chicago is also home to the Central, Southwest, and Northwest DuPage County Rail-Trail Loops and the DuPage River Trail, and near other trails in the DuPage County

Forest Preserves, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, and along the Fox River.

Trails can increase property values, boost local spending, improve transportation options, attract new residents and businesses, offer no-cost recreation to families, and support conservation.

West Chicago can boost itself as a trailhead and a must-stop destination by focusing on development that benefits a trail economy.

ADAPTIVE REUSE

West Chicago has many attractive historical properties and two historic districts—East Washington and Turner Junction. It also has the West Chicago City Museum. The West Chicago Community Center’s conversion to offices and event space can serve as a model for more public-facing or business-focused adaptive reuse opportunities.

Repurposing historical properties for new uses supports parallel efforts for economic growth and vitality in Downtown West Chicago by attracting residents and visitors. Adaptive reuse offers many additional benefits, including environmental and economic sustainability, support for start-up businesses (lower construction costs), a showcase for community pride and identity, and leveraging of urban revitalization trends.

Policies

- Partner with regional and national groups to share expertise and best practices for informing City decisions and policies around adaptive reuse and historic preservation.
- Support attractive, community-centered anchors and adaptive reuse projects that will further distinguish West Chicago as a hub for creativity and diversity in the western suburbs.
- Continue support for the redevelopment of the 1869 Chicago & North Western Depot. Current plans (Mexican Cultural Center–DuPage) for an expanded arts and culture venue with outdoor performance space promise to be a cornerstone of community gathering and activity for Downtown West Chicago.
- Consider a wide variety of strategies and policies to promote and raise awareness of the City’s historical assets.
- Ease any existing restrictions or obstacles for individuals and businesses with adaptive reuse projects and programs.

Implementation Strategies

- Coordinate a showcase event (such as tours and “open doors West Chicago”) for West Chicago’s historical assets that brings together a wide variety of partners, interests, and residents and visitors.
- Review existing design guidelines for residential properties and update as needed, and create new commercial storefront guidelines, to support adaptive reuse and redevelopment.
- Establish new design guidelines for new construction, major rehabilitation, and renovation projects to preserve West Chicago’s historical character. New construction should continue to respect historical qualities by using similar design elements, materials, window and door sizes and proportions, and modern solutions.
- Continue publicizing and expanding where feasible local incentives and grants.

SPOTLIGHT



Top left, right: The historic 1869 Chicago & North Western Depot, then and now.

Bottom: An architectural rendering completed for the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage of a revived, activated depot.



REVIVING THE DEPOT

The Mexican Cultural Center DuPage (MCC) has undertaken plans and studies to redevelop the historic 1869 Chicago & North Western Depot.

The MCC and its local supporters have reimagined the freight depot, located at 119 W. Washington Street, as a vibrant cultural and arts center to showcase the best of West Chicago.

Continuing to support the work already being done in the community and efforts like that of the MCC can help guarantee the future success of West Chicago Forward.

HOUSING

West Chicago should preserve existing neighborhoods and housing supply while identifying opportunities for new housing development. These developments can be primarily Downtown and in northeastern West Chicago.

West Chicago's housing stock should accommodate households of various sizes, incomes, and lifestyles. Uniform housing stock can result in missed opportunities to attract new residents. While most of West Chicago consists of single-family homes, the City has the chance to diversify its housing stock through new development, particularly



Downtown, and allow for retrofitting of existing homes.

An increase in the mix of housing types can appeal to a wider buyer pool and allow the City to remain attractive as market conditions continue to change. The City should work with developers to support housing opportunities for households at any life stage, whether students home from college, young families, or downsizing empty nesters.

DOWNTOWN

West Chicago residents, employers, employees, staff, and local businesses are interested in revitalizing Downtown and creating a vibrant district that celebrates West Chicago's history and culture. A



vital component of a lively Downtown is increasing the number of families who reside there. Successful Downtown businesses will need to capture customers from all over West Chicago and adjacent communities, but regular business from customers who live Downtown will also be essential.

Policies

- Encourage higher-density housing development and diverse housing types (including townhomes and apartments) in Downtown and within walking distance of the West Chicago Metra Station.



- Use the City’s ownership or control of many Downtown parcels to influence and direct the types of development that may take place there.
- Identify specific strategic locations for infill development based on the Central–Main Street Redevelopment Plan Update (2018).

Implementation Strategies

- Coordinate with Metra on innovative partnerships, easements, property sales, and leases to maximize opportunities to develop housing within walking distance of the West Chicago Metra Station.
- Continue promoting Downtown developments to achieve more than 200 apartment and condominium units.
- Consider reducing the minimum lot area for nursing homes and senior housing to allow greater housing diversity as residents “age in place,” which is seniors’ ability to live independently in their own home and community.
- Consider reducing parking requirements to promote land use and housing affordability goals. For example, restaurant (10 spaces per 1,000 square feet) and residential (2 spaces per unit) ratios may not align with market trends and inadvertently increase development costs.

NEIGHBORHOODS

West Chicago’s residential neighborhoods are nearly built out, so there is limited opportunity for new housing construction. That means housing improvements in residential neighborhoods should focus on maintaining affordability, energy efficiency, and habitable conditions.

Policies

- Encourage a diversity of housing types, including accessory dwelling units, in built-out neighborhoods.
- Encourage townhomes in new residential developments.
- Continue promoting a balanced, multilingual approach to code enforcement to support neighborhood stability and homeowners’ ability to maintain homes and property conditions.

Implementation Strategies

- Allow for a diversity of housing types at commercial nodes, such as the intersection of Neltnor Boulevard with North Avenue and Roosevelt Road.
- Allow accessory dwelling units, attic apartments, and coach houses in R-1/single-family-zoned residential districts.

SPOTLIGHT

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are secondary dwellings on the same property as a homeowner’s primary residence. They might be coach houses, an apartment over a garage, a tiny house, or a basement apartment. Sometimes they are known as granny flats or in-law apartments.

ADUs can have great benefits for a community. ADUs can house a family member, such as an aging parent, or provide extra rental income. They also can increase housing affordability and property values, increase density, and protect renters through more formal leasing arrangements.



AGING IN PLACE

“Aging in place” refers to policies that make it easier for seniors to stay in their homes and communities. Seniors who age in place have greater independence, live in healthier and safer environments, have a better quality of life by staying close to family and friends, and save money.

Residents who have chosen a community already know its benefits and are likely to have roots there. West Chicago can be proactive in attracting and retaining seniors and long-time West Chicago residents by enacting policies and practices that encourage residents to stay.

Policies

- Increase opportunities for seniors to age in place and remain part of the West Chicago community.
- Encourage homes that follow principles of Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility and also universal design.
- As housing is newly built or rehabbed, coordinate funding with local and regional partners to incentivize accessibility retrofits (such as ramps, chairlifts, grab bars, and easy-access closets).

Implementation Strategies

- Publicize to West Chicago seniors their eligibility for home maintenance and handyman programs (such as through DuPage Senior Citizens Council and DuPage Habitat for Humanity) to enhance access to low-cost services and help them live independently in their homes.
- Continue partnering with Ride DuPage Transportation Program and promoting DuPage County Senior Services. DuPage County offers many programs and resources that facilitate independent living for seniors, including housing assistance and advocates, home health care, transportation, and senior centers.
- Improve the walking environment in residential neighborhoods and adjacent to services to increase accessibility for adults who no longer drive. This includes providing places to rest, such as benches, and health and safety measures, such as shade for the daytime and good lighting at night.



AFFORDABILITY

The definition of “affordability” includes Area Median Income (AMI), which is the middle point of a region’s income distribution. That means that half of the people earn income less than that point, and half earn more. According to the Illinois Housing and Development Authority, more than 30% of West Chicago’s housing stock is affordable for home buyers with at least 80% of AMI and for renters with at least 60% of AMI.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines “affordable” as spending no more than 30% of household income on housing. Compared to most DuPage County communities, West Chicago housing is relatively affordable.

Policies

- Maintain and expand housing affordability for low- and moderate-income households, including seniors, public-sector employees like teachers and police officers, and service workers.
- Encourage a diversity of housing types: accessory dwelling units in built-out neighborhoods, townhomes in new residential developments, and apartments in Downtown developments.

Implementation Strategies

- Coordinate Federal, State, County, and local housing funding and resources to support low- and middle-income households, including seniors, public-sector employees, and service workers.
- Promote partnerships (such as DuPage Senior Citizens Council and DuPage Habitat for Humanity) and publicize residents' eligibility for such programs to give West Chicago homeowners in need access to low-cost maintenance services.
- Allow accessory dwelling units (also known as “granny flats”), attic apartments, and coach houses in R-1/single-family-zoned residential districts.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Capital improvements are long-term investments cities make to provide services and facilities to the population. They include roadways, water, wastewater, utilities, municipal facilities, equipment, and other critical infrastructure. Capital improvements are among the largest local government expenditures and are very important for implementing West Chicago Forward's ideas and recommendations.

Many capital improvement projects can incorporate green infrastructure to promote community health and vitality. Green infrastructure can enhance public health efforts, safety, and quality of life, and it has many environmental and economic benefits.

Policies

- Use West Chicago Forward to guide all decision-making around capital expenditures.
- Incorporate high-performance principles, such as project coordination and best available technologies, into all project phases, design guidelines, and development review. This offers high returns on investment by lowering costs and saving time.
- Consider developing a Green Infrastructure Plan to support sustainable urban relationships between people and place. This has benefits at three scales:
 - Regional: Protects diverse ecology and social uses of high-quality core landscapes and connect them to community-scale open spaces.
 - City: Encourages green infrastructure measures in public spaces and parks.
 - Site: Incorporates green infrastructure into hardscapes (such as walls and paths), individual properties, redevelopment sites, parking lots, and transportation rights-of-way.
- Integrate green infrastructure into capital projects and development efforts, land use regulations, and public works activities (such as stormwater curb extensions at the intersection of Main and Washington Streets).

- Consider combining policies that address Complete Streets and green infrastructure to maximize impact and efficiencies.

Implementation Strategies

- Include public engagement into the City's annual review of the Capital Improvement Plan.
- During periodic Comprehensive Plan reviews, review and revise the existing Capital Improvement Plan, which outlines the scope and funding for City infrastructure.
- Create streetscape and development guidelines to promote sustainability and community and climate resilience.
- Establish a partnership program (such as grants or cost sharing) in which the City and private sector (such as homeowners, businesses, and nonprofits) apply for assistance with green infrastructure installation (such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, and native plantings).

STREET NETWORK

West Chicago has multiple high-crash intersections along Neltner Boulevard, including at Main Street, Washington Street, and North Avenue. Several intersections could benefit from improvements for people traveling by any mode, but especially on foot or bike.

Policies

- Continue implementing the local roadway improvement program to maintain all of West Chicago's roads in a state of good repair. Implement intersection and roadway improvement projects that improve the safety of all road users.
- Adopt a Complete Streets Policy to prioritize investments and right-of-way design so streets are slower and safer for everyone. This will make the City more competitive for federal funding, such as the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP), the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L), and others.
- Together with a Complete Streets Policy, adopt a Green Infrastructure Policy to coordinate spending with sustainability and walkability goals and support grant applications.

- Prioritize roadway improvements (such as maintenance, resurfacing, and reconstruction) by pavement condition, traffic volume, and economic development initiatives.
- Align improvements with other planning and development priorities (such as incorporating stormwater and trail improvements into the scope of a roadway improvement project).

Implementation Strategies

- For roads that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) controls, consult with the DuPage County Division of Transportation or Active Transportation Alliance to develop a strategy for working with IDOT to promote road safety on all roads in the City and County.
- Build facilities to enhance safety and improve bike and pedestrian facilities into grant applications, particularly when there is strong community support for such improvements. Examples of grants may include the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L), the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP), and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ).

SPOTLIGHT



The Conservation Foundation / DuPage County Stormwater Management

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green infrastructure is scalable. At the regional scale, interconnected natural areas like forest preserves and stream corridors are core landscapes that help protect biodiversity, provide recreational opportunities, and help manage stormwater and flooding. At the City scale, smaller parks, greenways and trails, and other open spaces offer recreational and aesthetic benefits. At the site scale, green infrastructure best management practices and low-impact development involve vegetation, soils, and engineered solutions (such as bioswales and stormwater curb extensions) to mimic natural processes.

- Consider seeking collaboration or grant funding for the following projects:
 - Neltnor Boulevard/North Avenue Intersection Improvement Project (with IDOT): Intersection reconstruction, pavement markings, lighting improvements.
 - Neltnor Boulevard/Main Street Intersection Improvement Project: new bike facilities; intersection modernization; Americans with Disabilities Act improvements to facilitate accessibility; lighting improvements; streetscape improvements; improved shared-use path facility; pavement patching.
 - Neltnor Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project: Signaling, evaluation of shared access and parking, infill opportunities, pedestrian improvements, wayfinding, and signage.
- Request that developers install public-access sidewalks or bike paths in the right-of-way as part of developments. This can be of particular benefit in commercial corridors.

SIDEWALKS AND WALKABILITY

Sidewalks are essential to quality of life, public health, and economic vitality. Because they allow safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and commerce, safe, accessible, and well-maintained sidewalks are a fundamental investment.

Downtown West Chicago has a complete sidewalk network, but in other parts of the City and in adjacent unincorporated areas, the network is incomplete. Some potential difficulties exist in improving the network because of road jurisdiction, including unincorporated areas.

This may require coordinating projects with the Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage County, and other entities to improve perceptions of connectivity, safety, and accessibility for residents and visitors.

Policies

- Assess and map sidewalk gaps as well as bike connectors throughout the City and to major destinations in order to work toward an interconnected network of sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities and amenities.
- Work to continuously repair and expand the existing sidewalk network. Some

potential difficulties exist because of unincorporated areas next to and within City boundaries.

- Focus on sidewalk connectivity within the City and neighboring areas to improve community access to businesses, active public transportation, public services (government institutions, hospitals, pharmacies, clinics, schools, and others), and employment.
- Prioritize sidewalk expansion and completion in neighborhoods with limited sidewalk connectivity, including sidewalks on one side of the road. Examples include between neighborhoods, near the Union Pacific–West railway, along Roosevelt Road, Downtown, and on Neltnor Boulevard.
- Ensure that new development and redevelopment provide opportunities to improve access and walkability. This may include providing new sidewalks or trails, reducing or eliminating curb cuts, or providing pedestrian access within a site.
- Create new pedestrian-friendly facilities available to and accessible by the public.
- Improve sidewalk connectivity within the City and collaborate with neighboring areas to improve access to businesses, active public transportation, public services (hospitals, pharmacies, schools, and others), and employment.

SPOTLIGHT

Implementation Strategies

- Enhance the pedestrian network by assessing and enhancing sidewalk connectivity, crosswalks, street lighting, and pedestrian signals that prioritize public safety.
- Coordinate an annual West Chicago Jane’s Walk, a community conversation in honor of Jane Jacobs, a community advocate. In these walks, residents share community stories and discover unseen aspects of their neighborhoods. The walks also provide an opportunity for community members to interact with City officials and provide feedback on pedestrian and bicycling improvements.
- Partner with Metra and Pace to enhance transit access. Apply for grants through the Regional Transit Authority’s Access to Transit program, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L), and the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).



HELPING EVERYONE GET AROUND

West Chicago residents say access to green space is one of their favorite things about local life. Still, some residents might not know about these spaces or not feel welcome there. Wayfinding and signage that shows walking or biking distances, names of destinations, and types of amenities and activities available—like the skate park at Reed-Keppler Park, or minutes to walk to the City Hall Drop Box—can help say “Welcome!” For example, connect:

- Currier School, trails in Blackwell Forest Preserve, Neltnor Boulevard shopping and dining, and Riverwoods Apartments
- Downtown West Chicago, Kress Creek Farms Park and disc golf, Lemay Middle School, Roosevelt Road shopping and dining, and Aspen Ridge Apartments
- Indian Knoll Elementary School, Don Earley Park and fishing, Neltnor Boulevard shopping and dining, Downtown West Chicago, and Main Park Apartments

TRANSIT AND MOBILITY NETWORK

West Chicago faces some challenges to interconnectivity that transit and mobility can help address. These recommendations will create an interconnected, multimodal, and seamless mobility network that supports the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. “Seamless” mobility means the interconnection and integration into one platform of different transportation modes, such as trains, bikes, scooters, pooling, and ridesharing.

Policies

- Work to support a seamless mobility network to increase affordability, efficiency, and sustainability and support travelers’ safety and the transport of goods.



- Expand and improve access to transit and shared-mobility services through infrastructure improvements and new transportation programs (such as microtransit, paratransit, and micromobility).
- Focus on implementing projects, policies, and programs designed to create a more connected community.

Implementation Strategies

- Collaborate to retrofit the Metra Station and parking lot as a “mobility hub” with bike corrals; bike-share system docks or bike rentals; pickup areas for app-based ridesharing, shuttles, and people with disabilities; electric vehicle charging stations; and ample sidewalk and path connections to Downtown.
- Partner with the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to develop and launch







an on-demand community-wide or workforce-focused transportation program. A program could include vouchers for transportation network rides, on-demand microtransit service, late-night service (for shift workers), micromobility (such as bike and scooter sharing), or some combination of these and other shared-mobility strategies.

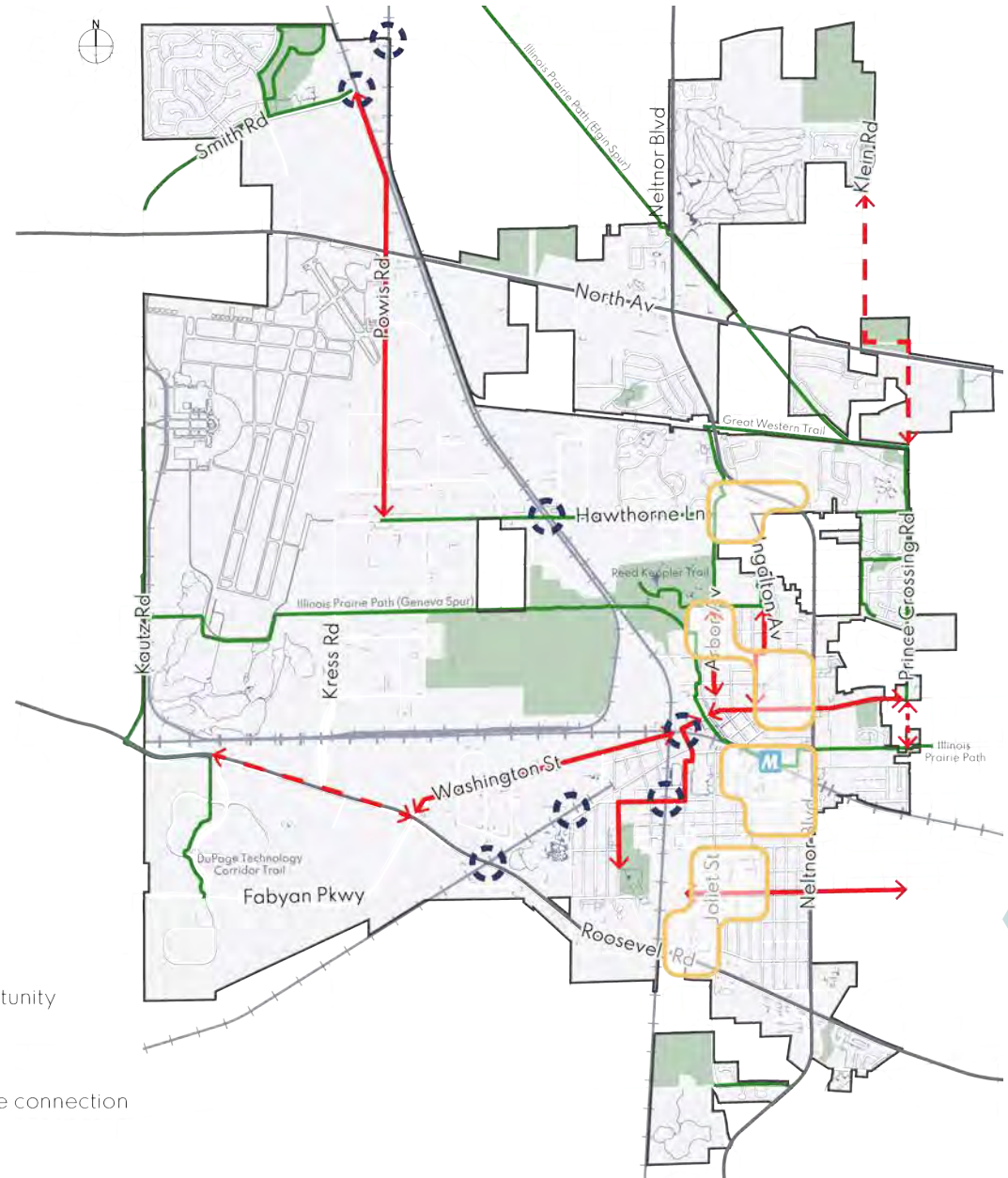
- Complete a City-wide audit of public parking lots to identify potential conversions to more productive land use (such as mixed-use development and multi-family development).
- Partner with the RTA to develop and pilot a last-mile/microtransit partnership program. Pursue funding through the RTA’s Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement program.
- Explore the feasibility of launching a micromobility partnership program (such as bike and scooter sharing).



Transportation Plan

Legend

-  Existing bike path
-  Sidewalks
-  Rail
-  Airport
-  State highway
-  Evaluate sidewalk conditions
-  Rail crossing improvement opportunity
-  Recommended bike connection
-  Recommended collaborative bike connection



PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS

Policies

- Expand access to West Chicago's parks and natural areas through physical improvements, programs, and partnerships to improve accessibility and promote inclusion.

- Develop an active transportation plan and a regional bicycle and pedestrian plan to guide West Chicago's vision and help secure federal grants.
- Enhance local waterways, wetlands, lakes, and ponds to create recreational opportunities, support native flora and fauna, and add aesthetic value.



Implementation Strategies

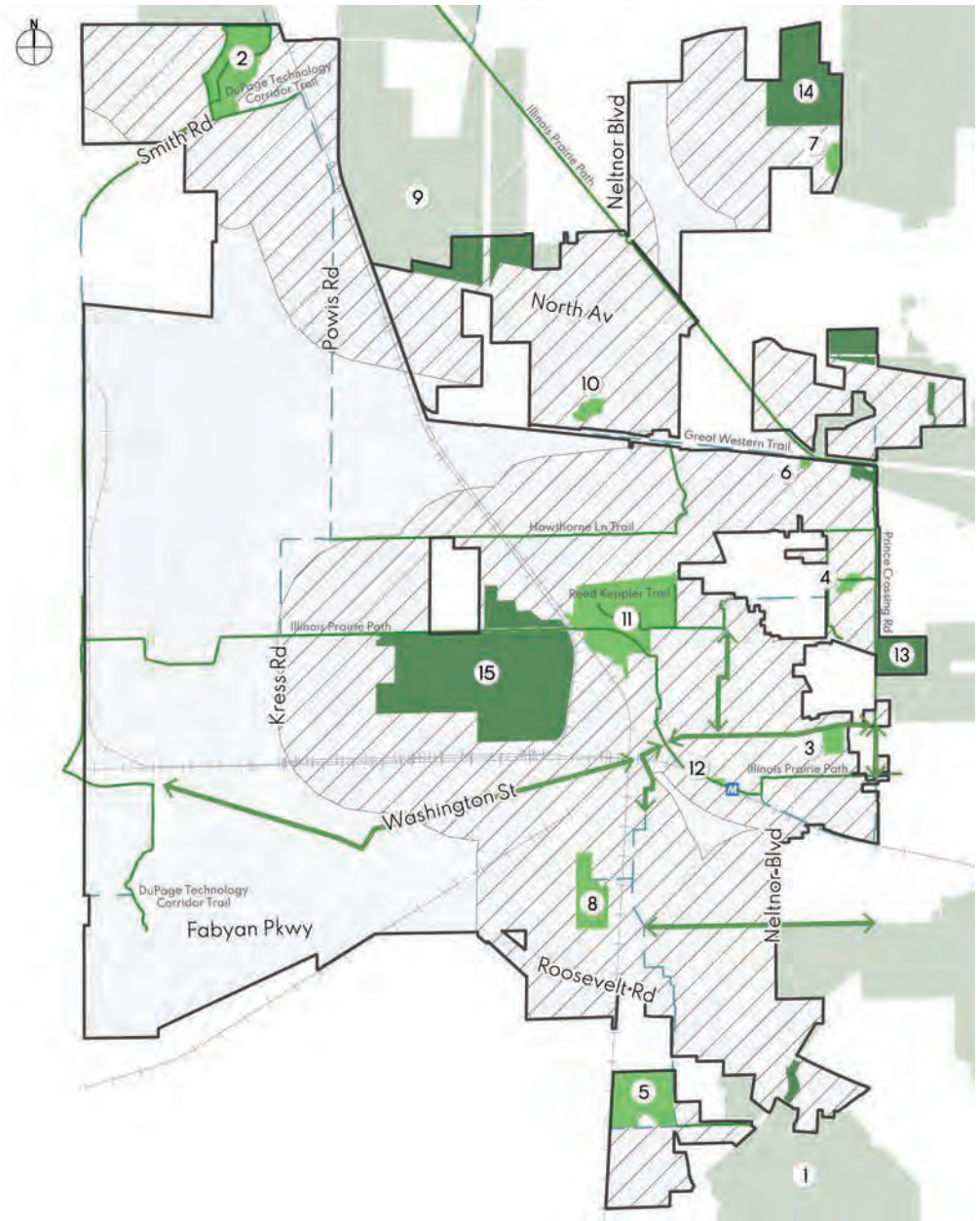
- Explore partnerships with the West Chicago Park District, DuPage County Forest Preserve District, and other land managers for physical improvements, programs, and partnerships.
- Improve connectivity between the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and West Chicago's neighborhoods (such as improved wayfinding and signage, access improvements, marketing, and outreach).
- Merge the City's bicycle and pedestrian plan with DuPage County's Plan. When the County considers roadway improvements, this can create opportunities to discuss certain items.
- Expand partnerships with the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and the West Chicago Park District to expand environmental education, stewardship, and outdoor recreation programming.
- Create small-scale parks or parklets Downtown.

Parks and Open Space

- 1 Blackwell Forest Preserve
- 2 Cornerstone Lakes Park
- 3 Don Earley Park
- 4 Hampton & Prince Crossing Park
- 5 Kress Creek Farms Park
- 6 Kwasman Memorial Park
- 7 Meadow Wood Park
- 8 Pioneer Park
- 9 Pratts Wayne Woods
- 10 Prestonfield Park
- 11 Reed-Kepler Park
- 12 Sesquicentennial Park
- 13 Timber Ridge Forest Preserve
- 14 West Branch Forest Preserve
- 15 West Chicago Prairie

Legend

- Parks
- Forest preserves
- Area within 10-minute walk of green space
- Existing bike path
- Planned bike path (DuPage County Bike Plan)
- Recommended bike connection



WATER AND WASTEWATER

Policies

- Develop a water system improvement program based on a hydrology and hydraulic (H&H) model.
- Support implementation of a best-in-class municipal water system and practices.

Implementation Strategies

- Until an H&H model is implemented, track location, time, and type of water-main breaks and other point repairs. This information can help prioritize water-main repairs and replacement.
- Continue to maintain, rehabilitate, and replace water mains, lateral lines, pumps, storage tanks, and other appurtenances to exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency standards.
- Continue hydrant flushing and valve exercise programs to ensure adequate fire protection.
- Revisit the sewer system improvement program for ongoing assessment, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement. Analyze the previous

assessment and work orders to determine any remaining issues, map locations, and prioritize areas with a high density of breaks or other issues.

UTILITIES

Policy

- Improve coordination and collaboration with utility providers, such as Nicor, ComEd, and others, to ensure the delivery of high-quality utility services and improve the resilience of utility and infrastructure systems.

Implementation Strategies

- Designate a utility corridor to maximize City access to utilities, such as water mains. Underground utility corridors group access to utility lines together to limit surface conflicts and disruptions and increase access.
- Partner with ComEd's various energy efficiency programs. ComEd has rebate, financing, and technical assistance programs to enhance the efficiency of the City's streetlights, municipal facilities, and commercial buildings.
- Explore the feasibility of using utility rights-of-way for more productive uses

(such as community gardens, trails, pollinator space, USDA Community Food Projects, and stormwater management).

RAIL, FREIGHT, AND LOGISTICS

West Chicago is an important logistics hub because it is close to air, rail, and highway transportation networks. The BNSF, Canadian National, and Union Pacific rail lines are important assets to West Chicago, but they create physical barriers. The shared Union Pacific-West and Metra rail line and embankment create a powerful hard edge that effectively divides the north and south sides of the City.

While the opening of the Wilson Avenue Bridge in 1989 created a north-south connection to Downtown, at-grade railroad crossings and frequent traffic backups illustrate how the rail line continues to function as a barrier.

Policies

- Explore ways to facilitate safe and efficient mobility across rail lines with the community, including pedestrian crossings/gates, edge delineators, advanced warning signs, improved lighting, pavement crossing improvements, and other eligible

projects through the Illinois Grade Crossing Protection Fund.

- Improve freight flow locally and regionally through infrastructure improvements coordinated with the public and private sectors.
- Adopt policies and implement projects and programs that facilitate freight's safe, efficient movement within the City. Policies that regulate freight travel (schedules) can prevent environmental impacts and optimize travel patterns.

Implementation Strategies

- Conduct a freight study to assess efficient travel and avoid traffic or shifts in travel patterns. This will optimize the freight schedule and decrease environmental impact in the community. The City should also incorporate study recommendations into its Capital Improvement Plan.
- Promote regulation of freight size and schedules in certain areas that have higher environmental or safety risks.
- Identify sites along North Avenue and Roosevelt Road, and Fabyan Road, that could support new transportation, distribution, and logistics development.
- Identify opportunities to establish an intermodal facility within the City to benefit the community and increase opportunities for economic growth.



RECOMMENDATIONS

ECONOMY

The following recommendations focus on maintaining West Chicago's vibrant local economy and supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs.

WORKFORCE

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MICROBUSINESS

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

RETAIL

WORKFORCE

West Chicago residents work in many industries. The leading ones are manufacturing, retail, and health care. Their places of work are all over Chicagoland, but primarily in DuPage and Cook Counties. West Chicago also attracts many employees from Chicagoland, primarily from DuPage and Kane Counties.

To continue prospering and sustaining a high quality of life, West Chicago needs to maintain a well-educated and diverse workforce. In an environment of constant economic and technological change, individuals need to learn new skills and training, sometimes multiple times.

Additionally, there are disparities between White adults and adults of other racial/ethnic backgrounds in West Chicago in educational attainment, employment, and household income. Decision-making that strengthens the local workforce can contribute to eliminating these disparities.

Policies

- Use existing data (quantitative and qualitative) to inform decisions around workforce development partnerships and investments.

- Target partnerships and investments toward underrepresented populations, including Latinos, low-income individuals, women, people with disabilities, and others.

Implementation Strategies

- Actively engage local businesses and educational institutions to identify which industries are experiencing worker shortages and the training to meet industries' hiring needs.
- Regularly gather local and national data on the evolving education and training needs of workers in the ever-changing economy.
- Partner with educational institutions and local businesses to establish internship, apprenticeship, or train-to-hire programs providing students with valuable on-the-job experience.
- Partner with social enterprises that employ residents (such as We Grow Dreams), perform essential services, and provide additional services like career training and job placement.
- Partner with the College of DuPage to connect local industries to employees and training opportunities.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MICROBUSINESS

West Chicago has a long history of entrepreneurship. Reinforcing a business climate that supports entrepreneurship creates more opportunities for “home-grown” businesses to expand and thrive. West Chicago can play a pivotal role in supporting local businesses and enhancing the vibrant, independent West Chicago economy reflective of its diverse population.

Policies

- Leverage the local economy and actively contribute to building entrepreneurial spirit.
- Provide financial, marketing, legal, real estate, and coaching connections and resources to entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- Explore ways to provide or connect small businesses to catalytic small business investment.

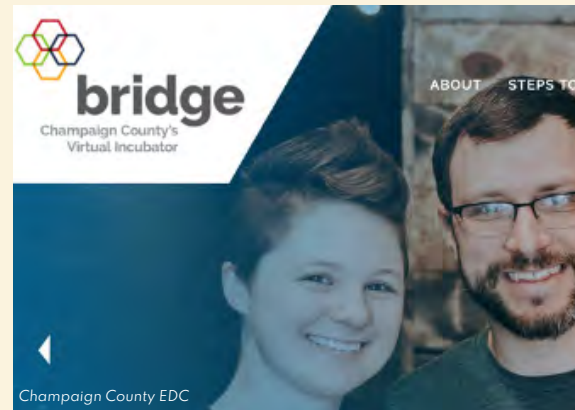
Implementation Strategies

- Coordinate community workshops and events with partners (such as Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce and DuPage County) to provide information on investment, potential funding opportunities, and budgeting techniques for local owners, entrepreneurs, and residents.
- Connect small businesses to capital opportunities, including microfinance organizations, community development financial institutions, and community banks (where most small business loans originate).
- Provide small business assistance with marketing, legal, real estate, accounting, and other business operations. Consider partnerships or ways to direct interested parties to organizations like the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Small Business Development Center, and various assets at the College of DuPage.
- Publicize spotlights on businesses and business owners across various City communications channels to serve as a networking resource and inspiration for potential business owners.
- Provide coaching and mentoring for microbusinesses with partners such as Innovation DuPage and Illinois Small Business Development Center at College of DuPage.
- Establish an adaptive reuse program and incentives (such as permit fee waivers) to help local entrepreneurs turn vacant buildings into new businesses.

INCUBATING SMALL BUSINESS IDEAS

West Chicago is recognized for its diversity, and residents say it's one of the best parts of local life. As a recognized hub of the Mexican American community, and with residents hailing from cultures worldwide, West Chicago can be home to many micro and small businesses that provide a variety of goods and services. These businesses also enrich West Chicago economically and culturally.

Many people have great business ideas but don't know where to begin, or think it is too difficult to become a business owner. The City already has supportive programs in place, and it can help further pave the way for potential business owners by leveraging current strengths and creativity. Taking action like focusing on ground-floor spaces, leveraging the power of food as a microbusiness generator, connecting potential business owners to resources and support, and loosening regulations to allow for creative pop-ups in otherwise vacant spaces can drive small business growth in West Chicago.



Top: Champaign County, in central Illinois, partnered with the City of Champaign and the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Champaign County Economic Development Corporation to launch a fully virtual incubator

Top right: Denver's Comal Heritage Food Incubator supports immigrants and refugees on their journey from home cooks to small business owners.

Bottom right: Tenants in Wisconsin's Platteville Business Incubator must be start-up businesses that make a good or provide a service and also have the potential to create new jobs.



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

West Chicago has long been home to businesses of all sizes and types. It successfully attracted an Amazon fulfillment center without any local financial incentives and, together with the DuPage Airport Authority, established the DuPage Business Center. To support the local economy and existing businesses, the City of West Chicago should devote resources to business retention and expansion (BRE).

Policies

- Maintain regular communication with local employers of all sizes. This will proactively address individual business challenges and regularly evolve the BRE strategy to address changes in the local, regional, and national markets.
- Assist businesses at all stages of growth or decline, including initial location, expansion, and additional location(s), as well as contraction, selling, and closing.

- As remaining industrial vacancies finalize leases and the DuPage Business Center fills, shift focus and strategy to business retention and expansion.

- Engage larger businesses to support the development of community identity components, including public art, landscaping, events, and marketing.

Implementation Strategies

- Establish a business and retention task force within existing economic development efforts. The task force can lead strategies to improve the local business climate and coordinate responses to individual business concerns.
- Conduct regular business surveys to identify warning flags for business relocation or expansion, receive feedback on programs and practices, and maintain ongoing communications with owners and managers. Delineate individual challenges versus common challenges, and prioritize urgent ones.
- Continue partnering with Choose DuPage and other regional entities to elevate industrial and office park development sites as a critical priority. This will allow for the spending of available local economic development dollars on Downtown and small businesses.
- Collaborate with the DuPage Airport Authority to market and leverage the benefits of locating near DuPage Airport.



TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a program that municipalities can use to set aside future increases in property taxes from a specific area, known as a TIF District, to pay for improvements in that area. In Illinois, a TIF District is usually in place for 23 years. TIF Districts can be extended for 12 more years, but that requires an act of the Illinois General Assembly. TIF Districts do not raise tax rates. Instead, they reinvest the increased portion (due to increased property values) in the TIF district, not in the standard taxing bodies.

TIF Districts can be powerful tools for targeted redevelopment and economic development, but they also have trade-offs. For example, TIFs can flatten tax revenues for public services like schools and libraries. They also have less oversight than other public spending does.

Through 2021, West Chicago has had three active TIF Districts: Downtown (1990), Oliver Square (Neltnor Boulevard and North Avenue, 2004), and Roosevelt Road/Fabyan Parkway (2017).

West Chicago offers two financial incentive programs paid through the Downtown TIF: the Downtown Retail and Restaurant Grant Program and the Façade Improvement Program. Downtown TIF funds also paid for new streetscape construction, a cooperative advertising program, and special events, such as Blooming Fest. In the Oliver Square TIF District, TIF dollars have funded property improvements and monument signs at what is currently known as Mosaic Crossing.

The Downtown and Oliver Square TIFs expire soon, and the City is planning to establish a new Downtown TIF District. With the assistance of TIF consultants, the City should solicit community feedback on the extension or redrawing of TIF Districts. (The Roosevelt Road/Fabyan Parkway TIF expires in 2040; the City should evaluate any significant changes to scope or boundaries closer to that time). The following recommendations apply should any TIF Districts be redrawn or renewed.

Policies

- Align TIF plans with the City's overall economic development plan.
- Use TIFs to catalyze, rather than create, market demand.
- Use TIF resources to benefit the broader community.
- Consider a debt service model. Issuing a City bond and using the tax increment to pay back bondholders would provide gap financing for a project with high up-front costs, such as a catalytic Downtown redevelopment project or a reimagined Mosaic Crossing property. The City must properly evaluate boundaries and parcels included in the TIF district to make sure they raise enough revenue and provide benefits to property owners and the larger community.

RETAIL

West Chicago has multiple successful retail areas, including Roosevelt Road, Downtown, Washington Street and Neltor Boulevard, and North Avenue and Neltor Boulevard. Local businesses and national and regional chains provide a variety of goods and services to City residents and employees.

Retail trends are constantly in flux. Over the past few decades, retail shifted from downtowns and main streets to department stores and shopping malls, then to big-box retail and power centers, and again to Amazon and e-commerce. West Chicago should continue to support local businesses in adapting and thriving in this ever-changing retail marketplace.

A traditional market study might focus on West Chicago's location, nestled between forest preserves, the DuPage Airport, industrial areas, and Fermilab. These all function as a barrier to attracting national retailers, as a result of distance and ease of access for non-West Chicago residents.

As online purchases become easier and easier, brick-and-mortar stores need to offer something unique to remain competitive. Examples include exceptional knowledge and service, an experience, or a connection to the local community and culture. With

its strong local pride, small-town feel, and cultural heritage, West Chicago is in an ideal position to benefit from this changing landscape.

Policies

- Promote small business relocation to Downtown West Chicago through financial assistance.
- Market West Chicago and its unique retail offerings to residents, employees, and employers in West Chicago and regionally.
- Think holistically about ground-floor spaces to allow for nuance and creativity in their permitted uses (such as escape rooms, special events venues, and coworking spaces). A focus on ground-floor uses beyond generating sales tax can allow the City to capture interesting and fun new ideas and implement placemaking strategies.
- Promote short-term licenses to allow for pop-ups, which are temporary spaces for stores or other businesses. These are especially good for first-time entrepreneurs, community groups, creatives, and minority- and women-owned businesses. They also provide immediate revenue to landlords, enrich the retail landscape, and replace vacant spaces.

- Make it easier for pop-ups to lease and operate spaces, including easier permitting and automated plan review and permitting for simple tenant improvements.
- Encourage storefronts in Turner Court that focus on foot traffic.

Implementation Strategies

- Develop West Chicago "shop local" discount and loyalty programs to encourage residents, employees, and employers to support local small businesses (which often are not members of local chambers), increase sales tax revenue, and reinvest in the community.
- Create new Commercial Storefront Guidelines to update the most recent guidelines from 1991.
- Expand ground-floor commercial uses to include small-scale manufacturing, nonprofit, arts and culture, child care and elder care, medical services, and shared workspaces.
- Conduct neighborhood needs assessments to determine whether residents can satisfy basic needs within 15 minutes of their homes (and employees within 15 minutes of their workplaces).



IMPLEMENTATION

West Chicago Forward is a bold vision. It offers specific recommendations to guide the future growth and change of the City of West Chicago. The City, partner organizations, and individuals should refer to the plan to guide decision-making and revisit the plan as changes occur.

Implementation is a process and an outcome, and so it requires more than a simple to-do list. Partnership, collaboration, and active commitment are key ingredients for successful implementation.

The following matrix presents West Chicago Forward's recommendations and potential partners. Critical to the overall success of these recommendations is that the City reference the Plan, reevaluate it, and revise it.

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Category	Implementation Strategy	Partners			
Community Health					
	<p>CH1 Partner with local and regional health providers to invite and support the work of <i>promotores de salud</i> (community health workers typical in communities of Latin American origin) among West Chicago residents.</p>				
	<p>CH2 Determine platforms and ways to reach different population groups quickly and effectively with vital information. Deliver alerts, notifications, and resources across multiple platforms (such as SMS, phone, WhatsApp).</p>				
	<p>CH3 Continue sharing and communicating public health resources and information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and DuPage County Health Department with residents, businesses, and others. Share other public health resources as they emerge (such as State or County COVID-19 assistance).</p>	<p>City: City Hall, West Chicago Fire Protection District, West Chicago Police Department</p>			
	<p>CH4 Support local businesses that promote COVID-19 protection measures for employees, customers, and workplaces, including after updates or relaxation of federal, state, and local requirements.</p>	<p>Community: Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage and Delnor Hospitals, DuPage County Health Department, Access DuPage, Metropolitan Family Service DuPage, Healthy West Chicago, WeGo Together for Kids, Area religious organizations, Area schools and school districts, Area community service groups, Puente del Pueblo, People Made Visible, Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce</p>			
	<p>CH5 Incorporate best practices and tools from the national COVID-19 experience into operations and institutional knowledge to prepare for the future. Examples include food banks, government communications, considerations for people with disabilities, community emergency response teams, and volunteer management.</p>				
	<p>CH6 Incorporate COVID-19 lessons learned into a policy document specific to West Chicago that addresses future public health issues, especially for vulnerable populations.</p>				
	<p>CH7 Incorporate any changes to City technology or services adopted during peak COVID-19 that will continue allowing for efficiencies without compromising quality (such as communications).</p>				
	<p>CH8 Work with partners to support vaccination, testing facilities, and testing events, such as mobile vaccination.</p>				
					
					
					
					
					
	<p>Collaboration and Partnerships</p>	<p>Capital Improvement</p>	<p>Communications and Programming</p>	<p>Planning and Evaluation</p>	<p>Policy and Operations</p>

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Healthy and Active West Chicago



CH9 Continue to co-sponsor events and programming to support strategic priorities of the City and Healthy West Chicago (such as healthy and active lifestyles, increased trail use, expanded active transportation opportunities).



CH10 Partner with businesses and organizations to incorporate specific goals and strategies of Healthy West Chicago into offerings and programs (such as menu incentives or labeling, grocer promotion of beverages other than soft drinks, public nutrition and cooking classes).



CH11 Tap local businesses and organizations to distribute information and resources on City initiatives and healthy living generally via their existing communications channels.



CH12 Determine and publicize walking and biking distances between popular destinations for people of all ages (such as Reed-Keppler Park to the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union Fountain on Main Street, a walking loop that passes through all public parks in West Chicago).



CH13 Determine a walking route for locals and visitors that highlights some of West Chicago’s assets and favorite places. Residents and other stakeholders who participated in West Chicago Forward identified some of these during the planning process.



CH14 Develop an annual bike and walk-run event that attracts regional visitors and participants (such as along the Prairie Path’s Geneva Spur, through the historic districts).



CH15 Activate spaces near Turner Court as oriented toward youth especially (but welcoming to all) in a way that harnesses young people’s creativity and preferred activities (such as skateboarding, scooters) and is safe for businesses, riders, cars, and others.



CH16 Partner with the Park District and Districts 33 or 94 for a “Friday Night Out” youth event at Park District facilities throughout the school year. Schools and families recognize a need for youth activities. The City can sponsor or help partners provide programming, gym space, and other needs (such as refreshments, in-kind donations). Increased youth participation translates to increased family participation.



CH17 Explore ways to help strengthen connections between other government entities, the business community, and the West Chicago Park District to support sponsorships for low-cost or no-cost physical activity programs, facilities, and equipment for youth and families (such as family night, bicycles, and low-cost sports).

City: City Hall, West Chicago City Museum

Community: Healthy West Chicago, West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Public Library, WeGo Together for Kids, Area schools and schools districts, Area religious organizations, Area community service groups, Puente del Pueblo, People Made Visible, Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners



CH18 Consult with the Park District and community organizations about working to create a network of community volunteers to lead outdoor recreation and groups visits in nearby parks and forest preserves.



CH19 Explore partnerships with local health-care education programs (such as College of DuPage Health Sciences programs) to increase access to and knowledge about health-care services for West Chicago residents.

Local and Regional Foods



CH20 Inventory underused areas (such as vacant lots, parkways, utility and transportation sector rights-of-way) for repurposing (such as mobile retail, farmers' market, community gardens).



CH21 Identify existing growers, makers, and microbusinesses that could benefit from being connected to a West Chicago local and regional foods network.



CH22 Consider the feasibility of the broad variety of local strategies and model ordinances developed by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning in its Municipal Strategies to Support Local Food Systems.



CH23 Develop a branding and loyalty initiative that recognizes and promotes local and regional small producers and retail outlets, which often are not members of local chambers of commerce. Invite local and regional makers and retail outlets or service providers to participate.



CH24 Support existing community markets that serve residents in need. Engage in information sharing with partners about populations in need to ensure that all West Chicagoans can access resources.

City: City Hall

Community: Healthy West Chicago, WeGo Together for Kids, Illinois Farmers Market Association, DuPage County Farm Bureau, Kane County Farm Bureau (Bounty of Kane), People's Resource Center, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, West Chicago Park District, Puente del Pueblo, St. Andrew Church, Leman Community Market, Neighborhood Food Pantry, Local businesses and vendors, West Chicago Garden Club, The GardenWorks Project, Residents



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Community Building and Civic Participation

Maintaining Hometown Pride



CB1 Develop, promote, and mark self-guided walks or routes through West Chicago for residents and visitors. These can have a focus on history, art, culture, food, or nature.



CB2 Publicize existing online guides or checklists for residents and other stakeholders on requirements for organizing and holding special events, and ensure that guides are user-friendly.



CB3 Review and determine where the City may be able to ease permitting, capacity, and other requirements for community-led special events, pop-ups, and other temporary installations to encourage small-scale, community-led activities and events.



CB4 Work with the Fire Protection District and Police Department personnel to evaluate and update existing capacity requirements and other compliance issues for outdoor special events.



CB5 Coordinate or sponsor a semi-annual or annual day of City-wide community service to bring neighbors and community members together.



CB6 Increase the sale of branded West Chicago merchandise (such as coffee cups and T-shirts) that appeals to a wide variety of West Chicago residents and visitors. Build on-the-street recognition and pride while enhancing the City Museum's small revenue stream.



CB7 Partner with local businesses to create a weekly or biweekly "Showcase Night Out" with food vendors and local music to bring residents Downtown.



CB8 Continue to partner with local schools and organizations to showcase youth art, music, and other cultural activities across the City in City-owned or City-accessible spaces.



CB9 Provide brief surveys to residents to evaluate existing events and determine new ones that appeal to community members' interests.

Community Diversity



CB10 Adopt a "welcoming city" ordinance for the City of West Chicago to recognize the legal rights and contributions of all West Chicagoans.



CB11 Adopt a City of West Chicago Statement on Inclusion and Diversity.



CB12 Encourage City of West Chicago staff and leaders and partner government agencies and other stakeholders to increase cultural awareness by attending immersive, informational programming or special events on culture, history, and diverse populations in West Chicago.

City: City Hall, Cultural Arts Commission, Historical Preservation Commission, West Chicago Fire Protection District, West Chicago Police Department, West Chicago City Museum

Community: West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Public Library, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, West Chicago Historical Society, Local businesses, Area schools and school districts, Area religious organizations, West Chicago Garden Club, Area community service groups, Residents

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners



CB13 Partner with and support Mexican American cultural organizations (such as Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois/Casa Michoacán’s June festival month) to expand and promote communications and cross-cultural partnerships (such as sister cities, business alliances, local official training), programming, and other opportunities.



CB14 Partner with local organizations to celebrate diversity and participate in events such as traditional December *posadas* (holiday parties), which provide a good opportunity for open houses and reaching residents in other ways.



CB15 Continue to focus resources on supporting organizers and expanding capacity and communications around the September Mexican Independence Day celebrations held in West Chicago.



CB16 Explore the possibility of an additional sister cities exchange relationship, particularly one in Mexico, and other cultural festivals or pop-ups that pertain to all of West Chicago’s diversity.



CB17 Consult with youth and youth-serving organizations about ways to reach young people successfully through different communication channels in order to publicize programs, initiatives, and partnerships that invite West Chicago youth to serve the City, volunteer, learn about City government, and actively participate.



CB18 Invite youth to a participatory social media strategy for the City that showcases youth voices on social media. For example, launch of a Snapchat campaign and filter, youth-produced YouTube videos, photography contests on Instagram, or a Tik Tok challenge or video campaign.



CB19 Encourage block parties and other resident-led events to promote community and build bridges between neighbors.



CB20 Implement spotlight features across all communications platforms that present personal narratives and expertise of a wide variety of West Chicago residents.

City: City Hall, City Council

Community: Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, People Made Visible, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, WeGo Together for Kids, West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Public Library, Area schools and school districts, Area community service groups, Youth-serving organizations, Residents



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Communications to Boost Engagement



CB21 Add capabilities for direct mail, SMS/text updates, and WhatsApp groups (used by many Spanish speakers across the region).



CB22 Increase functionality, interactivity, and intergenerational appeal of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube posts.



CB23 Launch an official TikTok account and develop campaigns by City of West Chicago departments and partners to educate and entertain residents and other stakeholders.



CB24 Aim for the effective communication of all City information and materials in Spanish, and in other languages where possible. An important way to achieve this is translation of all available communications; over time, the city may discover other cost-effective strategies to reach non-English-speaking audiences.



CB25 Incorporate Spanish-language communication, engagement, and outreach efforts into communications across City Departments to enhance communications with the Latino community.



CB26 Develop and distribute materials about serving West Chicago or volunteering in public, business, or nonprofit leadership roles.



CB27 Develop a campaign to welcome residents to get to know City staff and roles by creating and publishing individual spotlights in social media or the newsletter.



CB28 Create a bilingual hard-copy and online services directory that establishes City of West Chicago services, roles, and responsibilities. The directory can point residents to other partner government agencies at the City, County, and State levels (such as Park District and public schools) and help them know where to turn for particular services or supports.



CB29 Improve existing community and events calendars for interactivity and engagement (such as incorporating graphics; at-a-glance event descriptions and highlights; essential audience information; community posting; and direct links to social media). Event information should be easily accessible and available outside of a desktop website, including through mobile phone and in person (such as a hard-copy calendar available at City Hall or another public space).

City: City Hall

Community: Residents

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Increased Civic Participation



CB30 Ensure that meeting times and lengths are accessible to a range of residents and that Spanish interpretation is available. Make available interpretation and materials in other languages when possible.



CB31 Establish a youth advisory council to cultivate leadership skills, improve civic participation of young people and their families, and benefit the City by hearing new perspectives and concerns.



CB32 Seek out and support a network of volunteer West Chicago community "ambassadors" or "docents" for community information, recommendations, and tours.



CB33 Involve youth in cultivating local pride through a program of youth-led City tours for residents and neighboring communities.



CB34 Host an annual open house at City Hall to communicate that all West Chicago residents are welcome at City Hall. This can help clarify and educate about City services, roles, and responsibilities.



CB35 Livestream City Council across various media platforms.

City: City Hall, City Council, Public Works Department

Community: Residents, Area schools and school districts, West Chicago Public Library, West Chicago Park District



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Aligned Services



AS1 Establish an informational app for the City of West Chicago that coordinates across City departments. The app can directly connect residents to needed City services and resources. For maximum reach and functionality, the City should partner with other government agencies to incorporate their services.



AS2 Create and disseminate via various platforms messaging in English and Spanish to clarify the City’s services, roles, and responsibilities and direct residents to partner government agencies at City, County, and State levels (Park District and public schools) for help in particular services or support.



AS3 Publicly recognize partner government agencies (such as West Chicago Park District, West Chicago public school districts) and nonprofit organizations by sharing information and celebrating their successes and milestones in City of West Chicago communications channels. This can strengthen communications and understanding among all parties.



AS4 Provide City staff time across departments to participate in WeGo Together for Kids. District 33 school administrators support a broad-based network of City and County partners and organizations that serve children and families in West Chicago’s public elementary school district. Participation of City administrators and Department staff will increase awareness of pressing socioeconomic issues facing West Chicagoans, build relationships, and provide a venue for communicating about City news, services, and events for youth and families.

City: City Hall, City Council

Community: DuPage County, Wayne Township, Winfield Township, West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Public Library, West Chicago Police Department, West Chicago Fire Protection District, WeGo Together for Kids, Area schools and school districts, Area community service groups, Area religious organizations, Residents

Land Use and Zoning

Downtown



LUZ1 Determine the best sites for small-scale infill development and redevelopment.



LUZ2 Expand the list of permitted uses in the B-1 Central Business District to accommodate broader services, entertainment, and residential uses.



LUZ3 Revisit bulk requirements in the B-1 District to allow for greater height, density, and intensity.



LUZ4 Continue to implement recommendations and updates to the Central–Main Street Redevelopment Plan.



LUZ5 Expand mobile vendors as a permitted use beyond the M District to all B Districts.

City: City Hall, City Council, Plan Commission, Public Works Department

Community: West Chicago Park District, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Residents, Local entrepreneurs

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Single-Family Residential



LUZ6 Consider regulating residential zoning by form rather than use and density for future updates to the Zoning Ordinance. This will help achieve a diversity of housing that maintains the established neighborhood character.



LUZ7 Review the Zoning Ordinance for opportunities to simplify the development process and make it easier to administer. This includes whether bulk requirements (such as minimum lot width) that currently vary in residential districts can be made consistent.



LUZ8 Consider appropriate zoning districts for accessory dwelling units.



LUZ9 Consider reducing the minimum lot area per dwelling to accommodate a greater variety of housing types.



LUZ10 Consider expanding the list of permitted uses in single-family zoning districts to include compatible uses beyond detached, single-family homes. Examples may include allowing multi-family properties compatible with the scale and character of existing neighborhoods and supportive services such as daycares, particularly in the R-5 District.

City: City Hall, City Council, Plan Commission

Multi-Family Residential



LUZ11 Revise the Zoning Ordinance to allow for a greater variety of multi-family uses in commercial districts as permitted uses.



LUZ12 Reduce the minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet in the R-6 District to allow for more variety in multi-family housing types.



LUZ13 Reduce the front-yard requirements in the R-6 District to reinforce walkable, compact development.



LUZ14 Allow for greater maximum lot coverage in the R-6 District, detailed in the Central–Main Street Redevelopment Plan, to allow more walkable, compact development near Downtown.



LUZ15 Improve connections to outlying apartment complexes (such as Aspen Ridge Apartments, Towne & Country Apartments, and Timber Lake Apartments).

City: City Hall, City Council, Plan Commission



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Corridor Commercial



LUZ16 Expand mobile vendors as a permitted use beyond the M District to all B districts.



LUZ17 Consider reducing the minimum lot area for the B-2 District to encourage smaller, more incremental redevelopment.



LUZ18 Consider reducing the minimum lot area for nursing homes and senior housing to allow greater housing diversity as residents "age in place." Aging in place refers to seniors' ability to live independently in their own home and community.



LUZ19 Consider reducing parking requirements to ensure compatibility with land use and housing affordability goals. For example, ratios for restaurants (10 spaces per 1,000 square feet) and residential uses (two spaces per unit) may not align with current market trends. This may inadvertently drive up development costs.

City: City Hall, City Council, Plan Commission

Parks and Open Spaces



LUZ20 Create a Parks and Open Space Zoning District and include permitted and special uses in that District that help activate spaces and support overall economic development.



LUZ21 Expand mobile vendors as a permitted use in the newly created Parks and Open Space District.



LUZ22 Create an inventory of sites for temporary activations of open space and pilot programs. This is a cost-effective way to assess long-term opportunities for permanent improvements.



LUZ23 Ensure that regular Planned Unit Development reviews encourage and incentivize the provision of public open space over the long term, whether publicly or privately owned.



LUZ24 Expand the City's green infrastructure network consistent with the principles of low-impact development. This involves incorporating vegetation, soils, and engineered solutions (such as bioswales, stormwater curb extensions) to mimic natural processes.



LUZ25 Consider developing a green infrastructure plan to inform capital projects, development efforts, land use regulations, and public works activities.

City: City Hall, City Council, Plan Commission, Public Works Department

Community: West Chicago Park District, DuPage Forest Preserve District, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses, Residents

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Industrial



LUZ26 Combine the Manufacturing and ORI (Office/Research/Light Industrial) Zoning Districts into a single, comprehensive district focusing on employment and improved truck circulation.



LUZ27 Expand permitted uses to include workforce-supportive service and retail (such as childcare and fitness centers).



LUZ28 Expand permitted uses to encourage incubation of emerging businesses.



LUZ29 Continue to work with DuPage County and the Illinois Department of Transportation to coordinate improvements and improve vehicle circulation.

Airport



LUZ30 Review permitted uses in the Airport and ORI (Office/Research/Light Industrial) Zoning Districts to better capitalize on commercial development opportunities and airport-supportive uses.

City: City Hall, City Council, Plan Commission

Community: Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage Airport, DuPage Business Center

Placemaking



PM1 Communicate through City messaging, branding, and other communications that Downtown West Chicago is a multi-use destination.



PM2 Programs such as Plant Trees for Communities and streetscaping at the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union fountain created inviting spaces. New efforts can identify major corridors to improve community-informed streetscaping, branding, wayfinding signage, lighting, and other infrastructure improvements following City and Illinois Department of Transportation guidelines.



PM3 Identify City-owned properties Downtown for arts showcases or murals and connect with local artists and others to activate.



PM4 Support restaurants’ and other vendors’ outdoor offerings during three or four seasons. Provide incentives for local restaurants, such as funding to cover expenses associated with outdoor dining.

City: City Hall, Cultural Arts Commission, West Chicago City Museum

Community: Residents, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses, West Chicago Public Library, Youth-serving organizations, People Made Visible, Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, WeGo Together for Kids, Districts 33 and 94, West Chicago Historical Society, West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Garden Club



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Category

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Partners



PM5 Consider a weekly event like “Food Truck Night,” for food trucks from around the region to set up Downtown. Determine other potential times and locations for food trucks to gather.

City: City Hall, Cultural Arts Commission, West Chicago City Museum



PM6 Provide brief surveys to residents to evaluate existing events and determine new ones that appeal to community members’ interests.

Community: Residents, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses, West Chicago Public Library, Youth-serving organizations, People Made Visible, Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, WeGo Together for Kids, Districts 33 and 94, West Chicago Historical Society, West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Garden Club



PM7 To ensure successful mobile vending, consider instating permitting and licensing fees, requiring a DuPage County Health Department Annual Mobile Food Vendor Permit, exempting individual vendors (such as popsicle or produce vendors), or limiting times and days of permitted vending.



PM8 Maximize special events programming by permitting additional one-day or weekend-long events (such as an arts or music festival).



PM9 Activate spaces near Turner Court as oriented toward youth especially (but welcoming to all) in a way that harnesses young people’s creativity and is safe for businesses, skateboarders, cars, and others.



PM10 Identify indoor and outdoor public market locations to stimulate the local economy, improve the built environment, and encourage new developers to provide a holistic approach to public spaces for the community to enjoy safe and healthy outdoor activities.



PM11 Continue to support Downtown transit-oriented development (TOD) by collaborating with Metra and other transportation agencies and property owners to maximize available real estate, including parking lots owned by the City and the Regional Transportation Authority.

Trail-Oriented Development



TD1 Partner with DuPage County and the Illinois Department of Transportation to improve or incorporate bike and pedestrian facilities into forthcoming infrastructure projects.



TD2 Work with the DuPage County Division of Transportation to complete the following proposed regional trails and local bikeways projects: DuPage Technology Corridor Trail, West Branch DuPage River Trail, Great Western Trail Extension, Local bikeway projects (Winfield Road, Jewell Road, Prince Crossing Road, Main Street, Blair/Factory/Joliet Streets, and Kautz Road)

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners



TD3 Determine new potential locations to improve and extend existing trails, trail-oriented businesses and services, and rest stops and access points. Amenities may include wayfinding for West Chicago destinations and businesses, separate Prairie Path bike and pedestrian lanes through Turner Court, support for trail extensions, and promotion of other regional trails such as the DuPage River Trail and Fox River Trail.



TD4 Use bikeway signage and wayfinding as well as pavement treatments to enhance trail users' safety and comfort between Wilson Avenue and Prince Crossing Road.



TD5 The Illinois Prairie Path's Geneva Spur crosses Prince Crossing Road immediately south of Prince Crossing Road and Main Street, which has no traffic signal. Prince Crossing Road is a county road and federal-aid-eligible road (FAU 2536). Possible crossing improvements include high-visibility crosswalks, advanced warning signs, actuated warning beacons, and signals. The City will need to coordinate the design and construction of any improvements with the DuPage County Division of Transportation.



TD6 The Illinois Prairie Path spurs cross at Nelnor Boulevard, a busy arterial and truck route under Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) jurisdiction. While IDOT's jurisdiction introduces additional design constraints and review requirements, it is possible to implement well-designed bike and pedestrian facilities. Any improvements will need to align with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and IDOT's guidelines and regulations (such as Bureau of Design and Environment Manual, IDOT Local Roads and Streets Manual).



TD7 Incentivize and encourage efforts by the local and regional business community to open a family-friendly restaurant or craft brewery or brew pub to Downtown West Chicago. If possible, the brewery should be near the Prairie Path to support maximum economic benefit for Downtown West Chicago.



TD8 Coordinate annual bike events and walking tours with various local and regional partners to encourage community engagement and participation around improving walkability and bicycle infrastructure throughout the City.



TD9 Develop a sidewalk and bicycle network to connect parks, outdoor spaces, and recreational facilities. This will improve access to these spaces. For example, complete sidewalks around the West Chicago Prairie or locally designated "rail trails" near the Union Pacific-West, Metra, and Canadian National rights-of-way.

City: City Hall, Public Works Department

Community: Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage County Forest Preserve District, DuPage County Division of Transportation, West Chicago Park District, West Chicago Public Library, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Prairie Path, Active Transportation Alliance, Residents



Adaptive Reuse



AR1 Coordinate a showcase event (such as tours and “open doors West Chicago”) for West Chicago’s historical assets that brings together a wide variety of partners, interests, and residents and visitors.



AR2 Review existing design guidelines for residential properties and update as needed, and create new commercial storefront guidelines, to support adaptive reuse and redevelopment.



AR3 Establish new design guidelines for new construction, major rehabilitation, and renovation projects to preserve West Chicago’s historical character. New construction should continue to respect historical qualities by using similar design elements, materials, window and door sizes and proportions, and modern solutions.



AR4 Continue publicizing and expanding where feasible local incentives and grants.

City: City Hall, Historical Preservation Commission, Cultural Arts Commission, West Chicago City Museum
Community: Residents, Business owners, West Chicago Historical Society

Housing

Downtown



H1 Coordinate with Metra on innovative partnerships, easements, property sales, and leases to maximize opportunities to develop housing within walking distance of the West Chicago Metra Station.



H2 Continue promoting Downtown developments to achieve more than 200 apartment and condominium units.



H3 Consider reducing the minimum lot area for nursing homes and senior housing to allow greater housing diversity as residents “age in place,” which is seniors’ ability to live independently in their own home and community.



H4 Consider reducing parking requirements to promote land use and housing affordability goals. For example, restaurant (10 spaces per 1,000 square feet) and residential (2 spaces per unit) ratios may not align with market trends and inadvertently increase development costs.

City: City Hall, Plan Commission

Neighborhoods



H5 Allow for a diversity of housing types at commercial nodes, such as the intersections of Neltor Boulevard with North Avenue and Roosevelt Road.



H6 Allow accessory dwelling units (also known as “granny flats”), attic apartments, and coach houses in R-1/single-family-zoned residential districts.

City: City Hall, Plan Commission
Community: Residents, Homeowners

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Aging in Place



H7 Publicize to West Chicago seniors their eligibility for home maintenance and handyman programs (such as through DuPage Senior Citizens Council and DuPage Habitat for Humanity) to enhance access to low-cost services and help them live independently in their homes.



H8 Continue partnering with Ride DuPage Transportation Program and promoting DuPage County Senior Services. DuPage County offers many programs and resources that facilitate independent living for seniors, including housing assistance and advocates, home health care, transportation, and senior centers.



H9 Improve the walking environment in residential neighborhoods and adjacent to services to increase accessibility for adults who no longer drive. This includes providing places to rest, such as benches, and health and safety measures, such as shade for the daytime and good lighting at night.

City: City Hall

Community: Residents, Homeowners, Illinois Department of Transportation, Ride DuPage, Winfield Township

Affordability



H10 Coordinate Federal, State, County, and local housing funding and resources to support low- and middle-income households, including seniors, public-sector employees, and service workers.



H11 Promote partnerships (such as DuPage Senior Citizens Council and DuPage Habitat for Humanity) and publicize residents' eligibility for such programs to give West Chicago homeowners in need access to low-cost maintenance services.



H12 Allow accessory dwelling units (also known as "granny flats"), attic apartments, and coach houses in R-1/single-family-zoned residential districts.

City: City Hall

Community: Residents, Homeowners, DuPage Housing Authority, Winfield Township



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Capital Improvements



CI1 Include public engagement into the City's annual review of the Capital Improvement Plan.



CI2 During periodic Comprehensive Plan reviews, review and revise the existing Capital Improvement Plan, which outlines the scope and funding for City infrastructure



CI3 Create streetscape and development guidelines to promote sustainability and community and climate resilience.



CI4 Establish a partnership program (such as grants, cost sharing) in which the City and private sector (such as homeowners, businesses, nonprofits) can apply for assistance to install green infrastructure (such as rain gardens, permeable pavement, native plantings).

City: City Hall, Public Works Department

Community: Illinois Department of Transportat
DuPage Division of Transportation, Western Du
Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses, Resic

Street Network



CI5 For roads that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) controls, consult with the DuPage County Division of Transportation or Active Transportation Alliance to develop a strategy for working with IDOT to promote road safety on all roads in the City and County.



CI6 Build facilities to enhance safety and improve bike and pedestrian facilities into grant applications, particularly when there is strong community support for such improvements. Examples of grants may include the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L), and the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP).



CI7 Consider seeking collaboration or grant funding for the following projects: (1) Neltnor Boulevard/North Avenue Intersection Improvement Project: Intersection reconstruction, pavement markings, lighting improvements; (2) Neltnor Boulevard/Main Street Intersection Improvement Project: new bike facilities; intersection modernization; Americans with Disabilities Act improvements to facilitate accessibility; lighting improvements; streetscape improvements; improved shared-use path facility; pavement patching; and (3) Neltnor Boulevard Corridor Improvement Project: Signaling, assess shared access and parking, infill opportunities, pedestrian improvements, wayfinding and signage.

City: City Hall, Public Works

Community: Illinois Department of Transportat
DuPage Transportation Division, Active Transpor
Alliance, Residents, Local businesses

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Sidewalks and Walkability



CI8 Enhance the pedestrian network by assessing and enhancing sidewalk connectivity, crosswalks, street lighting, and pedestrian signals that prioritize public safety.



CI9 Coordinate an annual West Chicago Jane’s Walk, a community conversation in honor of Jane Jacobs, a community advocate and journalist. Residents can share stories about their community, discover unseen aspects of their neighborhoods, and connect with their neighbors. Such an event will also provide an opportunity for community members to interact with City officials and provide feedback on pedestrian and bicycling improvements.



CI10 Partner with Metra and Pace to enhance transit access. Apply for grants through the Regional Transit Authority’s Access to Transit program, the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP-L), and the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP).

Transit and Mobility Network



CI11 Collaborate to retrofit the Metra Station and parking lot as a “mobility hub.” The hub could include bike corrals; bike-share system docks or bike rentals; pickup areas for app-based ridesharing, shuttles, and people with disabilities; electric vehicle charging stations; and ample sidewalk and path connections to the surrounding Downtown.



CI12 Partner with the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) to develop and launch an on-demand community-wide or workforce-focused transportation program. This program could include vouchers for transportation network company rides, an on-demand microtransit service, late-night service (for shift workers), micromobility (such as bike and scooter sharing), or some combination of these and other shared-mobility strategies.



CI13 Complete a City-wide audit of public parking lots to identify potential conversions to more productive land use (such as mixed-use development, multi-family development).



CI14 Partner with the RTA to develop and pilot a last-mile/microtransit partnership program. Consider pursuing funding through the RTA’s Innovation, Coordination, and Enhancement program.



CI15 Explore the feasibility of launching a micromobility partnership program (such as bike and scooter sharing).

City: City Hall, Public Works

Community: Residents, Homeowners, Homeowners’ associations, Land owners, DuPage County Division of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses, Residents

City: City Hall, Public Works Department

Community: RTA, Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage Transportation Division, Active Transportation Alliance, Residents, Local businesses



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Parks and Natural Areas



CI16 Explore partnerships with the West Chicago Park District, DuPage County Forest Preserve District, and other land managers for physical improvements, programs, and partnerships.



CI17 Improve connectivity between the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and West Chicago's neighborhoods (such as improved wayfinding and signage, access improvements, marketing, outreach).



CI18 Merge the City's bicycle and pedestrian plan with DuPage County's Plan. When the County considers roadway improvements, this can create opportunities to discuss certain items.



CI19 Expand partnerships with the DuPage County Forest Preserve District and the West Chicago Park District to expand environmental education, stewardship, and outdoor recreation programming.



CI20 Create small-scale parks or parklets Downtown.

Water and Wastewater



CI21 Until an H&H model is implemented, track location, timestamp, and type of water-main breaks and other point repairs. This information can help prioritize water-main repairs and replacement.



CI22 Continue to maintain, rehabilitate, and replace water mains, lateral lines, pumps, storage tanks, and other appurtenances to exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency standards.



CI23 Continue hydrant flushing and valve exercise programs to ensure adequate fire protection for residents and businesses.



CI24 Revisit the City's sewer system improvement program for ongoing assessment, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and replacement. Analyze the previous assessment and work orders to determine any remaining issues to resolve, map locations, and prioritize areas with a high density of breaks, flooding, or other issues.

City: City Hall, Public Works Department

Community: West Chicago Park District, Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage County Forest Preserve District, DuPage County Division of Transportation, West Chicago Public Library, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Prairie Path, Active Transportation Alliance, Residents

City: City Hall, Public Works Department

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Utilities



CI25 Designate a utility corridor to maximize City access to utilities, such as water mains. Underground utility corridors group access to utility lines together to limit surface conflicts and disruptions and increase access.



CI26 Partner with ComEd’s various energy efficiency programs. ComEd has rebate, financing, and technical assistance programs to enhance the efficiency of the City’s streetlights, municipal facilities, and commercial buildings.



CI27 Explore the feasibility of using utility rights-of-way for more productive uses (such as community gardens, trails, pollinator space, USDA Community Food Projects, and stormwater management).

Rail, Freight, and Logistics



CI28 Conduct a freight study for recommendations on efficient travel and avoiding traffic or shifts in travel patterns. This will optimize the freight schedule and decrease environmental impact in the community. The City should also incorporate study recommendations into its Capital Improvement Plan.



CI29 Promote regulation of freight size and schedules in certain areas that have higher environmental or safety risks.



CI30 Identify sites along North Avenue and Roosevelt Road, and Fabyan Road, that could support new transportation, distribution, and logistics development.



CI31 Identify opportunities to establish an intermodal facility within the City to benefit the community and increase opportunities for economic growth.

City: City Hall

Community: Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage Transportation Division, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses

City: City Hall

Community: Illinois Department of Transportation, DuPage Transportation Division, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



Communications and Programming



Planning and Evaluation



Policy and Operations

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Workforce



W1 Actively engage local businesses and educational institutions to identify which industries are experiencing worker shortages and the training to meet industries' hiring needs.



W2 Regularly gather local and national data on the evolving education and training needs of workers in the ever-changing economy.



W3 Partner with educational institutions and local businesses to establish internship, apprenticeship, or train-to-hire programs providing students with valuable on-the-job experience.



W4 Partner with social enterprises that employ residents (such as We Grow Dreams), perform essential services, and provide additional services like career training and job placement.



W5 Partner with the College of DuPage to connect local industries to employees and training opportunities.

City: City Hall, Economic Development Department

Community: Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Local businesses, College of DuPage, WeGo Together for Kids, District 94, Other local schools, Small Business Development Center

Entrepreneurship and Microbusinesses



EM1 Coordinate community workshops and events with partners (such as Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce and DuPage County) to provide information on investment, potential funding opportunities, and budgeting techniques for local owners, entrepreneurs, and residents.



EM2 Connect small businesses to capital opportunities, including microfinance organizations, community development financial institutions, and community banks (where most small business loans originate).



EM3 Provide small business assistance with marketing, legal, real estate, accounting, and other business operations. Consider partnerships or ways to direct interested parties to organizations like the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Small Business Development Center, and various assets at the College of DuPage.



EM4 Publicize spotlights on businesses and business owners across various City communications channels to serve as a networking resource and inspiration for potential business owners.



EM5 Provide coaching and mentoring for microbusinesses with partners such as Innovation DuPage and Illinois Small Business Development Center at College of DuPage.



EM6 Establish an adaptive reuse program and incentives (such as permit fee waivers) to help local entrepreneurs turn vacant buildings into new businesses.

City: City Hall, Economic Development Department, Plan Commission, Historical Preservation Commission

Community: Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Choose DuPage, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Small Business Development Center, Local businesses and entrepreneurs, College of DuPage

Category

Implementation Strategy

Partners

Business Retention and Expansion



BRE1 Establish a business and retention task force within existing economic development efforts. The task force can lead strategies to improve the local business climate and coordinate responses to individual business concerns.



BRE2 Conduct regular business surveys to identify warning flags for business relocation or expansion, receive feedback on programs and practices, and maintain ongoing communications with owners and managers. Delineate individual challenges versus common challenges, and prioritize urgent ones.



BRE3 Continue partnering with Choose DuPage and other regional entities to elevate industrial and office park development sites as a critical priority. This will allow for the spending of available local economic development dollars on Downtown and small businesses.



BRE4 Collaborate with the DuPage Airport Authority to market and leverage the benefits of locating near DuPage Airport.



BRE5 Engage larger businesses to support the development of community identity components, including public art, landscaping, events, and marketing.

City: City Hall, Economic Development Department, Plan Commission, Historical Preservation Commission

Community: Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Choose DuPage, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Small Business Development Center, DuPage Airport Authority, Local businesses and entrepreneurs



Collaboration and Partnerships



Capital Improvement



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Policy and Operations

Retail



R1 Develop West Chicago "shop local" discount and loyalty programs to encourage residents, employees, and employers to support local small businesses (which often are not members of local chambers), increase sales tax revenue, and reinvest in the community.



R2 Create new Commercial Storefront Guidelines to update the most recent guidelines from 1991.



R3 Expand ground-floor commercial uses to include small-scale manufacturing, nonprofit, arts and culture, child care and elder care, medical services, and shared workspaces.



R4 Conduct neighborhood needs assessments to determine whether residents can satisfy basic needs within 15 minutes of their homes (and employees within 15 minutes of their workplaces).

City: City Hall, Economic Development Department, Plan Commission

Community: Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce, Choose DuPage, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Illinois Small Business Development Center, Local businesses and entrepreneurs, Employers and employees

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