

LET'S MAKE WEST TOWN A HUB FOR
ART AND THE CREATIVE ECONOMY



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Photo Credit: Kate McKenna

Chicago Truborn
GALLERY & BOUTIQUE



Photo Credit: Jeff Mancilla

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The West Town art scene is blossoming. Our local artists and galleries are thriving, not only as a result of widespread community support, but because their work reflects the rich tapestry of our neighborhoods and residents. We can make West Town an artistic destination and encourage this local renaissance by sponsoring more public art installations, fostering partnerships between our art galleries and other local businesses, and expanding existing local community programs to promote West Town art and artists.

A “sense of place” is fostered by having a strong identity and character that is deeply felt by local inhabitants and visitors. The beauty of public art is that it not only creates a fun and engaging urban experience, but it also helps our businesses prosper. As a center for art and the creative economy, West Town will attract visitors from all over the city and country, highlighting the talented works being created in our community and offering artists a pathway to greater city, state, and federal support.

INCORPORATING THE ARTS IN STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

(PARTNERSHIPS: LOCAL ARTISTS, COMMUNITY ART GALLERIES, ART ORGANIZATIONS AND MUSEUMS, LOCAL ARTISTIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ALDERMANIC OFFICES, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS)

Our first recommendation is to promote local artists and art through a revamped streetscape and banner program. The street banner program will fill our streets with a variety of different artworks by featuring work from local artists on public street banners along the West Town SSA corridors. Similarly, we will involve artists when designing future streetscaping projects, like our artist-designed SSA garbage cans, and other beautification efforts.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Local artists can submit their work to the Chamber for the revamped decorative street pole banner program.
- Engage with other community members by sharing artist-designed streetscape, banner, and placemaking efforts on social media.

WHAT WE CAN DO

- Garner committee support from the Chamber's marketing, beautification, and public art committees for an expanded banner program featuring local artist's work.
- The West Town SSA will continue to offer the Street Pole Banner Sponsorship program, in which decorative banners are displayed throughout the SSA to beautify the streetscape. For information on sponsorship information and application, please visit the web address in appendix section 10.1.
- Promote West Town's culturally diverse population by including banners in different languages in the banner expansion program.
- The West Town SSA can invest in artist-designed streetscape elements.

WHAT THEY CAN DO

- Continue to allow the installation of street pole banners and decorative streetscape items.
- Continue to support the use of artist-designed streetscape elements.
- Advocate for loosened public way restrictions for art programming.



Photo Credit: [NinaChicago.com](https://www.ninachicago.com)



Photo Credit: REP3.com

PUBLIC ART AND PROGRAMMING

(PARTNERSHIPS: LOCAL ARTISTS, COMMUNITY ART GALLERIES, ART ORGANIZATIONS AND MUSEUMS, LOCAL ARTISTIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ALDERMANIC OFFICES, AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS)

Our second recommendation is to expand our existing public art initiative and support other local arts-related programming. Public art is essential to creating a greater sense of place, makes our streetscape more enjoyable. This encourages people to linger longer, thereby increasing revenue for our businesses.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Apply for West Town SSA-sponsored art grants which are open to all artistic mediums.
- Attend and support your neighborhood art, music, and street festivals e.g. Do-Division Street Fest, West Fest, West Town Art Walk, West Town Food Truck Social, and West Town Winterfest.
- Support your local artistic institutions and businesses by attending openings and shows.
- Invest in your own personal collection by shopping at your local art galleries and purchasing pieces from local artists.

WHAT WE CAN DO

- Continue to foster strong relationships with local art organizations and galleries to create monthly after-hours programming that showcases the corridors.
- Expand digital platforms to include walking tours of public art and to create other means of access to the local art community.
- The West Town SSA can continue supporting local art through our West Town Public Arts Initiative and the West Town SSA-sponsored arts grant. The West Town Public Arts Initiative mission aims to create public art within West Town that values



Photo Credit: REP3.com



cultural diversity and takes art out of designated space and places it into the public context to create full accessibility.

WHAT THEY CAN DO

- Aldermen can create a fund matching program where they dedicate a portion of their menu money towards public art within their wards. This would enable the West Town Arts Initiative to issue art grants for projects that fall outside of the West Town SSA boundaries.
- Advocate for loosened public way restrictions for art programming.

PERFORMANCE, ART AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

(PARTNERSHIPS: LOCAL ARTISTS, COMMUNITY ART GALLERIES, ART ORGANIZATIONS AND MUSEUMS, LOCAL ARTISTIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, AND ALDERMANIC OFFICES)

Our third recommendation is to promote and advocate for the creation of new performance art and entertainment venues in West Town. Our commercial corridors are young and vibrant, but they lack a multitude of entertainment venues that could make our district a destination for nightlife. By promoting performances, art, and advocating for more entertainment venues, West Town will become a destination for nightlife and culture.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Provide your space or other vacant spaces at low or no cost for artists and art organizations to host creative events.
- Activate unused public spaces for short-term installations, bazaars, or community events.
- Support businesses that apply for a Public Place of Amusement (PPA) license, by signing petitions and writing letters of support to your Alderman.



Photo Credit: Empty Bottle



Photo Credit: Defibrillator Gallery



Photo Credit: Intuit Art Center

WHAT WE CAN DO

- Continue to develop relationships with placemaking organizations to activate our business corridors.
- Foster new relationships with neighbors and local businesses to help find and use venues for art-related events.
- Advocate for the creation of art-based attractions.
- Advocate for the creation of public spaces that can be used for creative activities.
- Continue to support the lifting of liquor moratoriums for new businesses in our commercial corridors.
- Work with local residents' associations to garner support for new PPA licenses in the community.

WHAT THEY CAN DO

- Work towards policies that give tax incentives for activating unused and vacant spaces while abolishing an existing tax rebate that encourages property owners to keep vacant spaces.
- Support the activation of public spaces for entertainment in our district.
- Help support businesses throughout the PPA license process.

GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

(PARTNERSHIPS: THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS, ALDERMANIC OFFICES, LOCAL CONGRESSMEN AND OTHER POLICY MAKERS, AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS, AND OTHER ART ADVOCACY GROUPS)

Our fourth recommendation is to create partnerships with city, state, and federal entities to help secure grants that encourage the expansion of art and entertainment initiatives in West Town.



Photo Credit: Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art



WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Share resources with the Chamber regarding art programming and funding sources.
- Sponsor a program by donating space, time, or funding for art programming.
- Participate in the West Town Public Arts Initiative by applying for a public art grant.

WHAT WE CAN DO

- Continue to provide information about grant funding opportunities.
- Tap into available art funding by strengthening relationships with city, state, and federal entities.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships throughout West Town to foster the expansion of the Public Art Initiative outside the West Town SSA.

WHAT THEY CAN DO

- Continue to fund and expand the City of Chicago's CityArts program, which provides operating support to "Chicago-based, arts and culture-focused, nonprofit organizations with budgets under \$2 million."
- Extend funding and promote the City of Chicago's Individual Artists Program, which "provides project-based funding for professional artists".
- Lobby the City of Chicago to continue its work towards transparency and a more user-friendly application process.
- Provide an Aldermanic liaison to work on the Public Arts Initiative.
- Advocate for loosened public way restrictions for art programming.



Photo Credit: Eric Formato





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Photo Credit: Chicago Truborn



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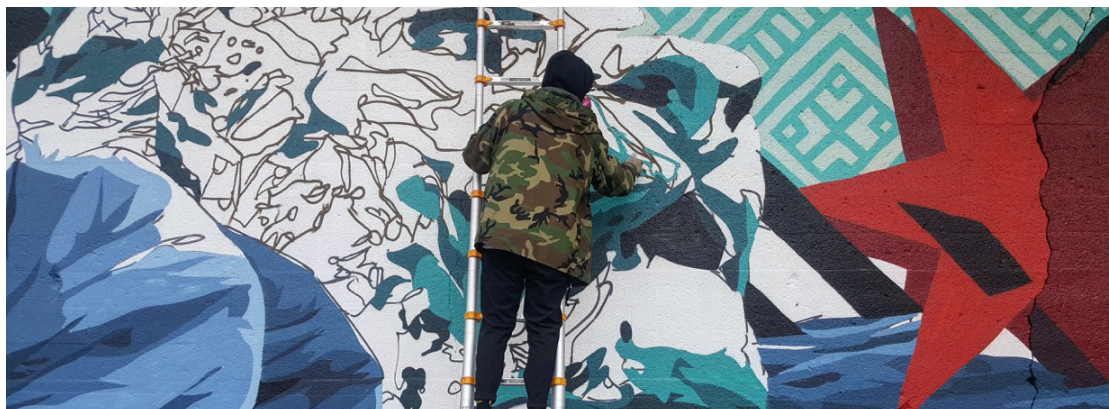


Photo Credit: Chicago Truborn

The More You Know

Public art is a vital component of making a community feel complete. It creates local landmarks that make spaces more memorable, contributes to the overall beauty and character of our neighborhoods, and generates more interest in the community at large. Public art is not limited to murals on buildings or underpasses—it can be integrated in ways that engage drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists. From 2015 to 2017 the West Town SSA has embodied the spirit of the Public Art Initiative in full by allocating \$50,000 in tax-based funding which brought thirty new public art projects to the West Town SSA district. These projects included contracts with local artists as well as artists from around the globe, including destinations like the Netherlands, France, and Belarus. Public Art Initiative projects range from mosaic pothole cover-ups, interactive installations, three-story murals, artist talks, and unsightly scaffolding and construction cover-ups.



