



WE ARE WEST TOWN

A Five Year Master Plan

COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER GUIDE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We Are West Town Vision

The Chamber's Master Plan seeks to promote economic development, foster a strong sense of community, and improve the quality of life within the West Town SSA, the West Town Chamber of Commerce service area, and the greater West Town Community Area.

Over the next five years, our Master Plan aims to promote an active arts community, preserve culture, advocate for community partnerships, and to make our commercial corridors cleaner, greener, safer, and more pedestrian friendly.

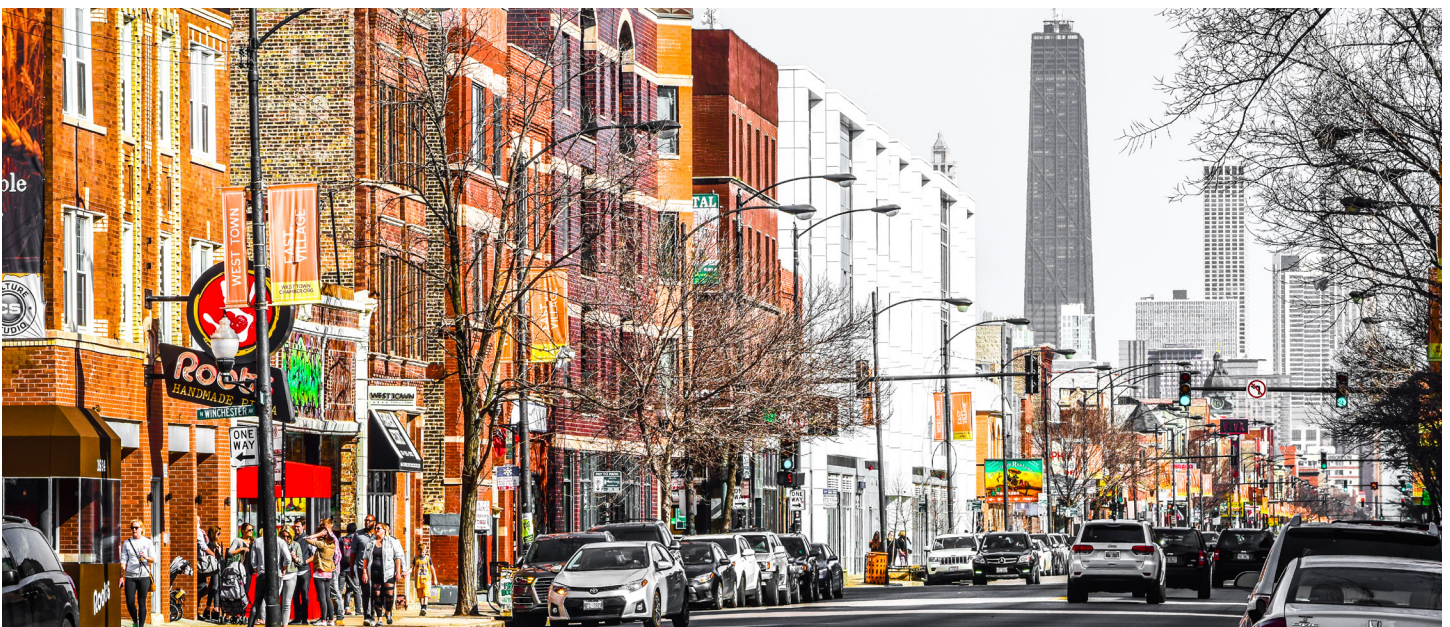
West Town Chamber of Commerce Mission

The West Town Chamber of Commerce's mission is to further strengthen its business community so that West Town continues to be a destination for shopping, dining, professional services, nightlife, and culture.

We Are West Town: A Five Year Master Plan

West Town is a fast-growing, vibrant community with a wealth of cultural institutions, diverse neighborhoods, and prosperous independent businesses. However, rapid development brings its own unique challenges. This plan seeks to encourage continued community growth while preserving the people, places, and institutions that make West Town one of Chicago's great destinations.

This Master Plan seeks to establish a vision of the future by providing a roadmap for the community to be implemented within the next five years. This plan is structured with Five Big Ideas each with a set of goals and specific actions. Implementation of the Five Big Ideas is divided into specific actions in which YOU as residents, business owners, property owners, and community members can participate, potential programs that WE the Chamber can put into place, and suggested actions that THEY the local Aldermen and city departments can advocate for in order to help make this plan a reality.



WHAT YOU CAN DO AS COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS



Big Idea 1



Big Idea 2



Big Idea 3



Big Idea 4



Big Idea 5



Let's Make Chicago Ave. More Pedestrian and Bicycle Friendly

Complete Streets

- Voice your support to your community organizations and city officials to request a traffic study and infrastructure master plan from CDOT
- Communicate concerns and problematic areas to your community organizations
- Become involved in the Chamber's advocacy efforts to improve infrastructure in West Town by participating in community surveys, meetings, and conversations
- Get involved with your local residents' association and other local organizations



Let's Make West Town a Leader in Sustainability

Green Infrastructure

- Learn more about sustainable practices, new regulatory policy changes, and how you can implement them in and around your property. Be on the lookout for information on these practices to be published by the Chamber.
- Voice support to your Alderman for green alleyways, permeable pavements, bioswales, bump outs, and other low-impact developments that help mitigate flooding and promote native plant havens for bees and butterflies

Rain Ready and LEED Certification

- Learn more about what these practices mean and what you can do in and around your property to reduce your environmental impact
- Act upon this knowledge by installing green infrastructure in and around your property
- Share your knowledge by encouraging your neighbors to install green infrastructure
- Connect with programs like RainReadySM at CNT for a property evaluation

Rejuvenating Butterfly and Native Bee Populations

- Create a native plant garden in your backyard
- Talk to your Aldermen and community garden groups about the importance of planting pollinator plants in parks, the public way, and underutilized spaces
- Garden supply businesses can provide native seeds and plants, label their native seeds and plants as "West Town Friendly" or "Native to Chicago," and encourage their purchase
- Get involved with your local gardening groups
- Participate in workshops at your local garden shop



Let's Celebrate Our Character and Diversity

Retaining Character and Diversity

- Support local family-owned ethnic businesses
- Use social media to promote our culturally diverse community area

Promoting the West Town Brand

- Promote the West Town brand on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, by using our hashtags and handles
- Attend events celebrating culturally significant holidays in the community

Spaces for Socializing, Places for Community

- Create and rally around proposals for the creation of dog parks, farmers markets, people spots, and other public spaces
- Utilize new and existing public spaces
- Create, visit, and participate in online community group pages
- Volunteer at local organizations to both get involved and give back

Preserving Our History

- Identify historic buildings and advocate for their place in our communities
- Utilize existing historic preservation programs to recoup expenses from rehabilitating older properties



Let's Cultivate Our Local Businesses

Business Retention and Attraction

- Participate in shop local incentives and other community programming in West Town
- Recommend new strategies or program ideas to the Chamber for community programming and ways to address vacancies
- Communicate your pride for West Town and its local establishments

Crime and Safety

- Participate in local police beat meetings and establish relationships with your local police officers
- Maintain beautification efforts, including planters and parkway landscaping, on your property to keep them tidy
- Engage with your local community groups to organize neighborhood cleanup days



Let's Make West Town a Hub for Art and the Creative Economy

Incorporating the Arts in Streetscape Elements

- 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

Public Art and Programming

- Apply and encourage others to apply for the West Town SSA-sponsored art grants which are open to all artistic mediums
- Attend and support your neighborhood art, music, and street festivals
- 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

Performance, Art, and Entertainment Venues

- Provide your space 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
- Foster a relationship with the Chamber to help find vacant spaces for art-related events

Government Partnerships

- Share resources with the Chamber regarding art programming 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

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