

CITY OF  
**WEST CHICAGO**

WHERE HISTORY & PROGRESS MEET

**NOTICE**

**PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Monday, September 25, 2017  
6:00 P.M. - Committee Room (A)**

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum
2. Approval of Minutes
  - A. Public Affairs Committee of July 24, 2017 with changes.
  - B. Public Affairs Committee of August 28, 2017.
3. Public Participation / Presentations
4. Items for Discussion
  - A. Marketing Plan
5. Items for Consent
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business
8. Reports from Staff
  - A. West Chicago Police Department Monthly Report
9. Adjournment

Approved with changes 8/28/17

## MINUTES

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Monday, July 24, 2017 6:00 P.M.

**1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum.**

Chairman Chassee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Roll Call found Brown, Garcia, Meissner and Gagliardi.

Alderman Hallett and Birch Ferguson was not in attendance.

**2. Approval of Minutes.**

**A. Public Affairs Committee Minutes of June 26, 2017.** Alderman Brown made a motion, seconded by Alderman Meissner to approve the minutes of the Public Affairs Committee meeting with no changes. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**3. Public Participation / Presentations.**

Alderman Mr. Michael Ferguson addressed the Committee on Video Gaming and expressed his opposition to having this ordinance passed.

**4. Items for Discussion.**

Alderman Meissner had requested at the Public Affairs Committee meeting in January 2017 to have yield signs placed at the intersections of Persimmon Avenue, High Ridge Drive and Meadow Ridge Drive. Alderman Meissner informed staff that the yield signs were put in place except on Meadow Ridge Drive and were also taken down by unknown subject(s). Chief Upfinger did inform staff that he would look into this matter.

**5. Items for Consent.**

**A. Resolution No. 17-R-0043 Intergovernmental Agreement between the County of DuPage and the City of West Chicago for participation in the DuPage Justice Information System (DuJIS) Project.** Alderman Brown made a motion, seconded by Alderman Meissner to direct this item to City Council for approval. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**B. West Chicago Halloween Parade.** Alderman Brown made a motion, seconded by Alderman Garcia to direct this item to City Council for approval. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**6. Unfinished Business.**

**7. New Business.**

**8. Reports from Staff.**

**A. West Chicago Monthly Police Report**

**9. Adjournment.** Alderman Garcia made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Gagliardi. The motion was approved by voice vote, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Yahaira Bautista*

Executive Secretary to the Chief of Police  
West Chicago Police Department

## MINUTES

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Monday, August 28, 2017 6:00 P.M.

**1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Establishment of a Quorum.**

Chairman Chassee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Roll Call found Brown, Garcia, Birch Ferguson, Meissner and Gagliardi.

Alderman Hallett was not in attendance.

**2. Approval of Minutes.**

**A. Public Affairs Committee Minutes of July 24, 2017.** Alderman Brown made a motion, seconded by Alderman Gagliardi to approve the minutes of the Public Affairs Committee meeting with changes. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Birch Ferguson, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**3. Public Participation / Presentations.**

**4. Items for Discussion.**

**5. Items for Consent.**

**A. CROP Hunger Walk - St. Andrews Lutheran Church.** Alderman Meissner made a motion, seconded by Alderman Birch Ferguson to direct this item to City Council for approval. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Birch Ferguson, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**B. West Chicago Frosty 5K Walk/Run.** Alderman Meissner made a motion, seconded by Alderman Birch Ferguson to direct this item to City Council for approval. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Birch Ferguson, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**C. Wheaton Academy Homecoming Fireworks.** Alderman Meissner made a motion, seconded by Alderman Birch Ferguson to direct this item to City Council for approval. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Birch Ferguson, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**D. 2017 Railroad Days Festival - Final Report.** Alderman Brown made a motion, seconded by Alderman Gagliardi to direct this item to City Council for approval. Voting Aye: Chairman Chassee, Alderman Brown, Garcia, Birch Ferguson, Meissner and Gagliardi. Voting Nay: 0. Motion carried.

**6. Unfinished Business.**

**7. New Business.**

**8. Reports from Staff.**

**A. West Chicago Monthly Police Report**

**9. Adjournment.** Alderman Brown made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Garcia. The motion was approved by voice vote, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:04pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Yahaira Bautista*

Executive Secretary to the Chief of Police  
West Chicago Police Department

# CITY OF WEST CHICAGO

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

ITEM TITLE: Presentation of Marketing Plan Created by Mungo Creative Group	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4.A.
	FILE NUMBER: _____
	COMMITTEE AGENDA DATE: September 25, 2017 COUNCIL AGENDA DATE:

STAFF REVIEW: Rosemary Mackey	SIGNATURE_____
APPROVED BY CITY ADMINISTRATOR:	SIGNATURE_____

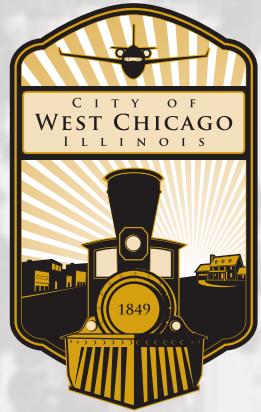
**ITEM SUMMARY:** Mungo Creative Group, the firm chosen by Council to create a formal three-year Marketing Plan that will guide the City's efforts in elevating community perception in and around the surrounding area through multiple strategies including media relations, public relations, special event marketing and more, will present the completed Plan and answer any questions about the process or outcome of the final document.

Creating a formal Marketing Plan to more effectively position West Chicago in the region was a directive of the West Chicago Strategic Plan, created in 2016. The Marketing Plan will be a roadmap to help promote West Chicago's unique attributes and elevate the City's image within DuPage County and the Chicago region as a railroad "hometown" independent of recent suburbanization, and reinforce its distinct sense of place and community character.

The attached copy of the Marketing Plan is the result of community outreach that solicited feedback from residents and other community stakeholders regarding current perception and constructive ideas on how to enhance City image. The Marketing Plan includes an editorial calendar outlining suggested topics to garner positive press coverage and attract a broader multi-generational audience, increasing the use of social media to include a Facebook and Instagram presence, and other strategies and tactics.

**ACTIONS PROPOSED:** Staff recommends approval of the Marketing Plan with implementation to start immediately.

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

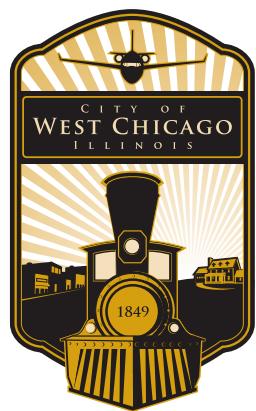


# 2017



# WEST CHICAGO

Strategic Marketing Plan



*West Chicago Strategic Marketing Plan | 2017*

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*West Chicago has a rich history that has largely been forgotten and has become a "hidden gem."*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/SITUATION ANALYSIS

The City of West Chicago (the City) offers both challenges and opportunities when it comes to communicating its brand to current and potential residents as well as the business community. The City's great diversity is at the same time an incredible strength and a challenge that needs to be carefully handled. The City is hampered by an outdated reputation that dates back decades and which needs to be rectified. West Chicago has a rich history that has largely been forgotten and has become a "hidden gem". It is a place where people relocate because of its affordability, great transportation and a strong sense of community. The City is largely misunderstood by surrounding communities and the perception of the City doesn't match the current reality. That needs to be addressed and can be done so with an aggressive marketing communications program.

While there are significant perception issues for the City, there is a tremendous amount of opportunity for re-branding and offering residents programs and tools to make them proud of their City and community. This Plan will critique the current efforts based on research, best practices and recommendations from Mungo Creative Group (MCG) who has participated in similar re-branding efforts for other municipalities.

This Plan will offer a practical guide to a tactical execution of marketing strategies that will best serve City residents and attract newcomers to West Chicago. The purpose of this Plan is to help the City effectively debunk myths that have plagued it for decades and integrate innovative and relevant marketing strategies and tactics into its repertoire. This Marketing Plan will include the following key elements and recommendations for the City:

- Public relations and marketing messaging summary
- SWOT analysis of the City
- Website and online tools best practices
- Media relations tactics
- Events and experiential marketing opportunities
- Recruiting businesses and residents into West Chicago

The Plan will offer a comprehensive look at how to better serve the residents through marketing materials, get the word out, and provide programming which will enhance the City's image while also encouraging residents to spend time together as one community. The details of this Plan are deeply rooted in research and targeted best practices from cities of similar sizes and MCG's expertise. Prior to fully implementing the recommendations outlined in this Marketing Plan, the City should take into great consideration how the function of marketing should operate and be managed. Continued dedicated and centralized effort to control the accuracy, consistency and frequency of the City's marketing communications will be most effective in reshaping its image.

This Marketing Plan includes an overview of MCG's research, an analysis of West Chicago's current environment, illuminating strategic priorities for the City, and delving into a plan of action that the City can realistically implement given its limited budget and resources.

Our recommendations focus on a marketing and communications strategy which supports and enhances the broader recommendations to help the City attract new businesses and grow its business cluster. This marketing strategy aims to answer the following questions:

1. Market segmentation: What are the target segments for the City of West Chicago and what are the key messages that should be delivered to each segment?
2. Market awareness: How can the City drive awareness to each segment and what channels can be used?
3. Key partnerships: What key partnerships should the City develop to support its re-branding goal?

The strategies and recommendations captured in this Plan will lay the foundation for a rich marketing program to expand and mature. We hope that by implementing these recommendations and committing to an ongoing and agile marketing and branding effort, the City will be well positioned to realize its long-term vision.



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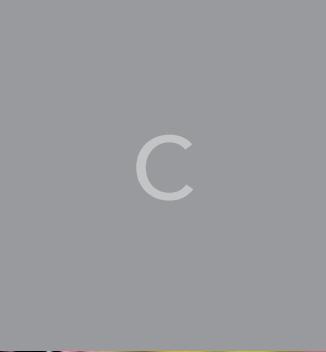
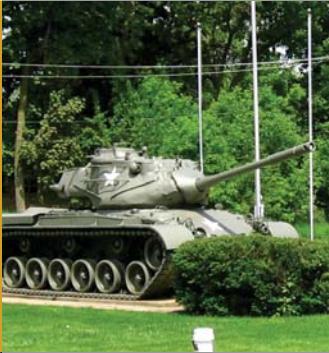
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## INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

This Plan began as an extension of the City's Strategic Plan that included a comprehensive view on where the City currently is and what the long-term strategic vision is. As a complement to the larger Plan, the Marketing Plan is to serve the purpose of better informing the public of happenings while also serving as a launching point for re-branding efforts. An objective of this Plan is to facilitate effective communication to the public of City operations, services and events while also serving as a launching point for re-branding efforts. An objective of this Plan is to identify key strategies and actions that will guide the City in developing a repositioning strategy and a long-term marketing program that is focused on attracting new business, supporting the City's economic growth and capitalizing on the City's diversity.

This strategic document will help West Chicago communicate more effectively and solidify its value to the City's audience segments. Toward this end, the Marketing Plan will include both external marketing towards business prospects outside the region, and internal marketing to reach existing businesses, stakeholders and allies within the region. One theme which continually emerged throughout our research was the need for the City to invest in growing its network and building stronger partnerships with a wider variety of stakeholders, including small businesses. Adopting a collaborative approach with these public and private organizations will enable West Chicago to achieve these marketing goals on a much larger scale by providing the City access to resources, funding, and expertise which it does not currently have. This will be explored in greater detail throughout the Plan.

## RESEARCH APPROACH

MCG firmly believes that to deliver a complete marketing communications plan, comprehensive research is necessary. Below are activities MCG has conducted on behalf of the City to complete this plan.

- One hour focus group
- Individual staff interviews
- Electronic survey that went out to those who receive City communications
- Interviews with City's Latino population

During the research phase, questions were carefully crafted to take the pulse of various attendees and interviewees relating to how residents feel about living in West Chicago, coupled with constructive ideas on how to enhance the City's image.

The one-hour focus group was conducted with a sampling of 14 attendees, two representing the Latino population. All these residents volunteered their time to provide feedback by answering the City's call for participation. The style of the focus group was that of a roundtable where each participant had equal time to engage. Residents answered specific questions, but also had the opportunity to go 'off-topic,' having a chance to air grievances and cover subjects that were important to them. Many residents followed up with MCG privately to contribute even further. This research method was very effective as information was extracted not just from the focus group, but also from the attendees privately providing and volunteering information.

Individual staff interviews provided a different perspective from that of the residents, and covered topics important to the staff who work for the City. Gathering this information was crucial, as the staff represents those who would execute the marketing communications plan and who need to agree to the ideas presented. In addition, staff in several City Departments were interviewed to ensure a holistic municipal viewpoint was represented. These interviews will be used to round out the research and provide the City perspective when creating a complete Plan.

The survey to City residents resulted in more than 80 responses from people of all backgrounds. Three questions were asked to ensure maximum return rate and participation. The survey was meant to provide a larger representation of the focus group. The survey and interview answers matched very closely those answers in the City Strategic Plan.

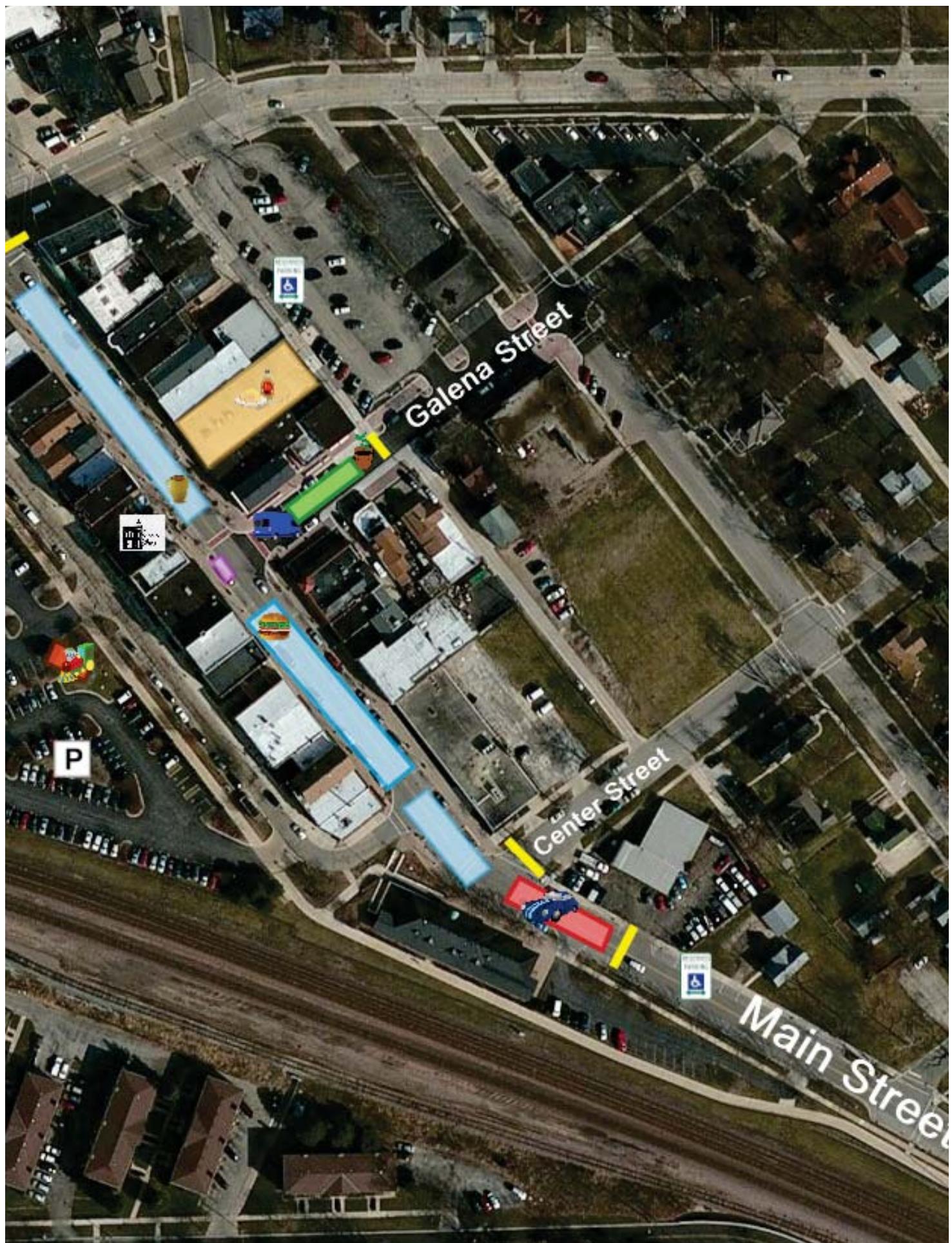
Finally, MCG conducted phone interviews with several residents of the City's Latino community. The residents were sourced with the help of the Director of West Chicago City Museum, who is a notable member of the Latino community in West Chicago.

All the qualitative and quantitative research will provide a holistic view of the Marketing Communications Plan that couldn't be written without the collaboration of staff and survey participants.

*"Gathering this information was crucial, as the staff represents those who would execute the Plan and who need to agree to the ideas presented."*

- Mungo Creative Group





## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SUMMARIZED

The Marketing Communications Plan will focus on the following key elements:

- Improving the image of the City
- Assessing the effectiveness of current marketing communication programs
- Providing recommendations based on research and best practices from other cities on making marketing communications more effective
- Making West Chicago part of the dialogue not just with residents but also amongst neighboring communities through outreach via social media and traditional media
- Fully auditing current social media efforts

The strategic priorities of the Plan largely have to do with elevating the City's image and offering recommendations on how to make the City marketing communications better in order to attract new residents, inspire current residents and obtain positive media coverage of West Chicago

## MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Based on research and best practices from other cities, (listed in the trends section) the following are marketing objectives for this Plan:

- Elevating the printed newsletter content even more so than it already is
- Maximizing the website
- Generating awareness and interest in West Chicago
- Providing a strategic social media recommendation that would include:
  - Recommendation on whether the City should have a Facebook page
  - Creating a crisis communication plan regarding social media
  - Making an Instagram recommendation

## MARKETING MISSION

The marketing mission is to improve the City's image through reliable, realistic and cost efficient means that the City will be able to execute with existing staffing resources. This Plan will outline said tactics that the City will be able to execute itself or outsource, should the City choose to do so. The ultimate mission of the Marketing Plan is to better serve residents and to better represent the City to its residents and those in the neighboring communities.

## MARKET SEGMENTATION/ TARGET MARKET SEGMENTS

Simply put, the two demographics that are most prevalent in the City are the Latino and the Caucasian populations. When these segments are further broken down, the sub-segments are millennials, the Baby Boomers and Generation X. Each of these segments requires a specific communication strategy and this Plan is designed to deliver that through various programs that would appeal to each demographic.



# SWOT ANALYSIS

## **STRENGTHS:**

**Affordability:** Affordability draws people to West Chicago who are looking for a place to settle and call home. This is an attribute that can be communicated on a more consistent basis via all communication channels such as reminder tweets or "did you know" tweets, e-mail newsletters and media relations.

**Diversity:** Diversity of West Chicago is already celebrated by the City and there is no shortage of communication about the importance of this element. The positive impact of a diverse community is what attracts many people to West Chicago and needs to continue being a critical element in communication.

**Community:** The strong sense of community in West Chicago is a very important quality. Potential residents and those who live in West Chicago want to be engaged and the City provides that feel of a small community. Capitalizing on that small city feel through various communications would help the City publicize this attribute to the external audience.

## **WEAKNESS:**

**Property Taxes:** Because property taxes are on the higher side, the element of communication that would be helpful is emphasizing all the programs and infrastructure that are supported by taxes.

**City Amenities:** Perceptions of the lack of certain City amenities (downtown attractions, grocery stores, etc.) should be addressed through communication of accessibility to existing amenities and the negative conversation can be positioned as a positive one. Discussing upcoming improvements can help offset negative perceptions. Being very proactive about showcasing and sharing positive City offerings and sightings is critical to include in the messaging mix.

## **OPPORTUNITIES:**

**Location:** The convenience of the West Chicago location is something that needs to be highlighted. This is a positive attribute that can be tied into commuting and an overall sense of convenience and quality of life for both residents and potential residents. Transportation options and the physical location of West Chicago bode well for further amplification of these benefits.

**Diversity:** Communicating the City's rich history and its diversity is a clear winning strategy and needs to be done in a more methodic and deliberate way through an editorial calendar (as shared in the PR Tactics Section).

**Schools:** Showcase the City's public school system's high-quality, caring and hardworking teachers, administration and staff as well as sharing success stories of students emerging from that system and the programs and efforts that supported them on their journeys.

## **THREATS:**

**Realtor Recommendations:** Influencing realtors and realty digital properties (Zillow, Apartments.com, websites and social media) is a critical component for educating potential residents on the advantages of the City. This can be done by arming realtors with easy to use tools and effective messaging and will be addressed in the PR tactics part of this Plan.

**School Score Perceptions:** While, taken at face value, the school scores are not impressive, communicating the size of the multi-lingual student body and number of ESL students will provide context and can be positioned as a positive for many potential residents.



*"Diversity of West Chicago is already celebrated by the City and there is no shortage of communication about the importance of this element."*

- Mungo Creative Group

# MARKET AWARENESS/QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH BASED ON SURVEY AND INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Through comprehensive research we were able to find clear indicators of activities that are working, while also finding out those activities and City elements that need to be improved. Below are research results both from the focus groups, interviews, and phone calls as well as the electronic survey.

**Current communication efforts:** Focus group participants have indicated unanimously, including the Latino population, (seven interviews) that e-mail communication and e-mail updates are by far the most effective way to reach them. They enjoy the immediacy and convenience and feel that they are getting sufficient information from the alerts. Focus group participants feel very informed and also feel that the website, Twitter and the printed newsletter are great complements to the e-mail updates. Many of the focus group participants and interviewees said that checking City communication is part of their morning ritual and they crave the information that is being sent. More than 40% have indicated that they would like more communication from the City. The LED sign also had favorable reviews amongst the residents. They thought it provided an important way to inform and showcase relevant information in a timely manner. Recommendations on moving this effort in an even more positive direction will be found in the website and Online Tools Section.

**Missing communication efforts:** Focus group and interviewee participants (16) have indicated that they feel the City needs a Facebook page to best meet their information needs. They feel that Facebook would allow them to conveniently get the information through a medium they already frequently use. The other communication tool that was mentioned often is a hometown newspaper. Residents felt that a newspaper was a great place to showcase resident stories and town happenings in far more detail than the email and other communications. This newspaper should be digital so that citizen journalists can submit their photos and stories; it would however require an editor from the City staff or consultant to manage the content and publication schedule.

## Perceptions from the focus group and interviewees (in many regards back up the Strategic Plan)

Participants were asked to best describe the way the City makes them feel and the varying responses revealed that there is a lack of pride in the community. Below are the descriptions and narratives behind the responses.

**Diverse:** Many interviewed in surveys, focus groups and individual interviews felt the word "diverse" was a good way to describe West Chicago. While most people described it as a positive, a few of the residents (five comments) used it as a negative, saying that the City is overly sensitive to the Latino population and not paying attention to other residents. While most participants said they wanted to preserve West Chicago as a diverse community, it came up at least five times that, in their opinion, diversity is what is causing some of the problems and that residents need to learn how to be good neighbors.

## Close-knit/strong community/small/quaint/peaceful/safe:

The topic of West Chicago being a great place to raise a family because of its size was brought up at least 10 times.

Participants feel that the City's size is a huge advantage and the fostering of community is a very appealing characteristic.

**Controlling:** The perception of seven participants surveyed felt that the City of West Chicago is not as friendly as it should be toward its residents or small businesses and imposes too many rules and regulations that alienate both residents and businesses. These respondents felt that the City could "loosen some of the rules to make it an easier place to live and not have such control over its residents and businesses." This feeling of 'control' came up many times during focus group as well as in the survey that was distributed.

**Secretive/unapproachable:** These words came up six times when explaining the City of West Chicago by the focus group attendees in small numbers, as in three participants total. These respondents felt the City conducts business in a secretive manner and that the "City can't be trusted," specifically, when referencing obtaining permits for small businesses. Another example of this that came up was that participants felt as if the City didn't take their input when making major decisions that affected them. This sentiment mainly came from the Latino population who felt this was a big problem in dealing with the government. One of the respondents from the focus group who is a very active and prominent member of the Latino community, said that the Latino population "just doesn't trust" the government (this is not unique to West Chicago, with some of that feeling being rooted in the way the Latino population communicates with government) and that there will be hurdles to overcome, however they are possible to overcome. In the recommendations part of this Plan this will be addressed as well as steps the City has already taken to address this.

**High property taxes:** This was mentioned by respondents as the number one reason they feel people aren't moving to West Chicago and the reason people are leaving West Chicago, eleven participants stating this as a reason. A realtor in the focus group and a realtor who completed the survey mentioned this as a tough topic when trying to sell West Chicago to potential residents. Respondents also felt they are unsure where their taxes are going to as they feel the schools aren't sufficient.

**Needed beautification:** Approximately twenty of the respondents feel that overall, the City needs a facelift. Route 59 doesn't make people want to stop by, instead, just makes them want to pass as soon as possible. In addition, respondents felt like a downtown strategic plan might help generate more desirable business ventures. Participants also feel that the City needs proper policies in place to enforce external home standards through fining or ticketing offenders who do not meet community standards. This was mentioned specifically in the context of housing upkeep.

**Blue-collar/low-income:** The participants feel that majority of the City is viewed as "blue collar and low income" by neighboring cities. Eight respondents saw this as a hardworking group of people and see it as a positive, but it was mostly depicted as a negative and associated with lower incomes and lower educational levels.

**Affordable:** Twenty-two of the respondents say the value for homes has been one of the most attractive aspects of West Chicago. Several residents commented on how they couldn't find a better value for their house anywhere else and that is why they specifically moved and stayed in West Chicago. They also feel that general shopping that is available is inexpensive and easily affordable to them.

**Historic:** Eight of the residents felt that the City has a lot to offer from a historic standpoint and that is something they'd like to see advertised even more. They felt proud to live in a place with such a rich past and it was a source of joy and pride for them and their families.

**Healthy:** With so many biking and walking paths, surveyed participants feel that their City is very walkable and healthy. Bringing up health initiatives, the participants are proud of this fact and wanted to see this carry on for future generations.

**Stagnant/Traditional:** Nine of residents surveyed feel that there aren't many changes that are keeping the City current and are afraid that West Chicago will become one of those "forgotten" cities if the perception of the City doesn't change. Becoming "stagnant" was a phrase that came up frequently.

Although not significant, there were other comments mentioned at least once such as that there is still a perception by neighboring communities that West Chicago has gang activities. To battle this misconception, the City has to continuously share positive stories via its messaging platforms. Also, a few participants feel that there isn't enough to do for teens and the younger population, including millennials. The suggestion here is to better

publicize the events, which do indeed have something to offer for all age groups in the City.

#### **Improvement to current City efforts:**

Some residents (twelve) feel that the LED sign was in the wrong location and not visible enough, though they appreciated what it tried to do. Residents feel that Breakfast with the Mayor, and Evening with City Council type of events need to happen more frequently. They feel that there should be post-meetings reports to inform those who could not attend in person. Some respondents feel that the events seem "thrown together" and are just for one segment of the population or another — not something for the entire community. Several respondents (both from the Caucasian and Latino communities) feel like there needs to be more events that are geared toward bringing people together not just "celebrating diversity".

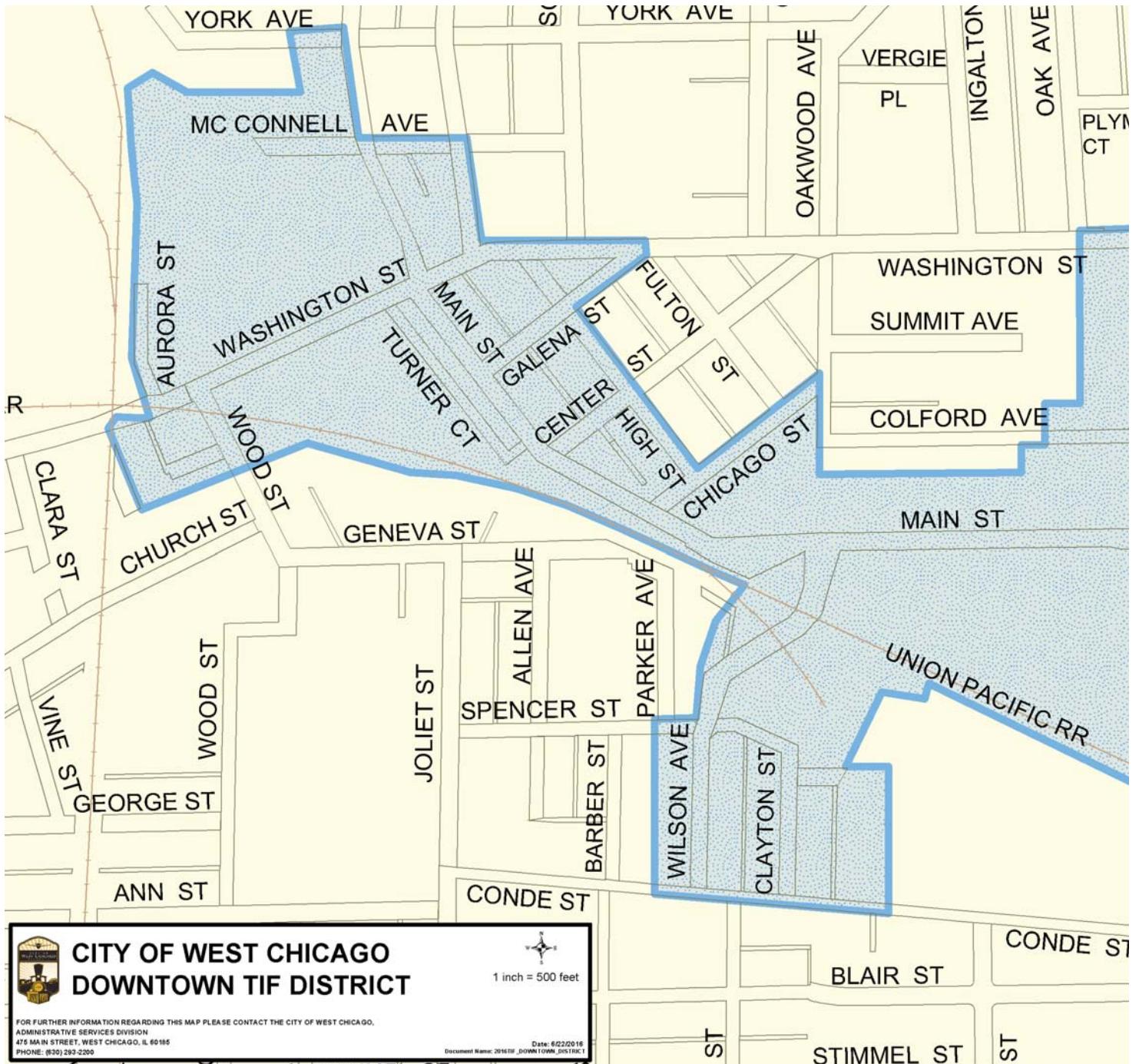
#### **Other participant observations:**

Participants commented on the fact that positives need to be celebrated and, while negatives need to be addressed, they do not need to be accentuated. Topics such as historic preservation and the City's health initiatives should be communicated as well as the fact that the City is a tightly knit and connected community. In the Recommendations Section of this Plan, we will discuss the "We are West Chicago" Program in more detail to speak to this point.

Participants also feel that the City of West Chicago should focus more on its "homegrown heroes" and highlight these stories via mediums outside of the e-mail newsletter or the website. They want to read more about people who have chosen to make West Chicago better to give them a sense of pride in the community. In the Recommendations Section of this Plan, we will discuss how to make this into a reality.

Six of the participants also suggest that the name of the City of West Chicago be changed. While they understand it isn't likely to happen, they do feel that the current name isn't helping the City's image. This was brought up 10 times during the focus group and the survey.

The final recommendation participants agreed upon is that there needs to be some kind of program to showcase what it means to be "a good neighbor" to others. In places where diverse populations are living in proximity there is still a sense of being uncomfortable with each other, whether segregated by age, race, wealth, etc. In the recommendation part of this Plan, we will outline some steps to help with this.



*"It is to no surprise that most of the cities we looked at shared some of the same challenges that West Chicago did prior to implementing marketing plans."*

- Mungo Creative Group

# TRENDS IN OTHER CITIES

In order to come up with a comprehensive Marketing Communication Plan, it is critical to look at what other cities across the United States are doing when it comes to their marketing and branding tactics. MCG looked at ten municipal marketing plans in the following cities and states:

- Richmond, Virginia
- Vandenberg, California
- O'Fallon, Illinois
- Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin
- Worcester, Massachusetts
- Westchester, New York
- Brewster, Vermont
- Freemont, New Hampshire
- Kirkwood, Missouri
- South Bend, Indiana

These are both cities that are thriving in addition to comparably sized cities to West Chicago. They were carefully selected to learn from some best practices for the City to consider.

It is no surprise that most of the cities we looked at shared some of the same challenges that West Chicago did prior to implementing marketing plans. Below are some characteristics/tips that these cities shared in implementing in their communication and marketing efforts.

**Be honest:** Four in five people say that city managers and elected officials should communicate transparently to build trust. Engaging in genuine two-way dialogue with all stakeholders is a strategy that will pay off. When it comes to city marketing plans, we found that all ten cities employed this strategy when informing their residents and communicating with them. While this point may seem obvious, there have been countless examples of cities forgetting the transparency portion of communication and losing the trust of their residents. Once lost, trust is very difficult to earn back.

**Be authentic:** Cities that have done well with attracting new residents and keeping current residents happy have been cities that know who they are and aren't afraid to highlight that. They don't

try to be something they aren't and are proud of the distinctions which set them apart. The applicable point for West Chicago is its diversity. This is something that makes West Chicago authentic and should be highlighted at every chance possible. Owning that fact is something critical in coming off as genuine and truthful to both prospective and current residents.

**Show engagement:** Participation in the conversation about how we move towards a 'better city' is key – be open to all suggestions for how West Chicago can make a positive difference. Cities that do well take suggestions from their residents and hold focus groups often and with as many possible groups as they can. In addition they especially embrace those who return to give more feedback. They rely on city ambassadors who are passionate about the city and take their feedback to heart.

**Utilize Social Media:** Cities that are successful at communicating freely utilize social media, with 100% of the cities we researched using Facebook as a primary tool to inform its constituents. Besides disseminating information, these cities are using Facebook to raise engagement, awareness and to recruit potential residents to their cities. In addition to Facebook, cities are capitalizing on the visual nature of video hosting platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo and are hosting video content that promotes their city. Additionally, in many of the cities that have been surveyed and researched, Instagram is starting to become a real game changer in the way cities are engaging with their residents through sharing compelling imagery.

**Create the future:** Cities shouldn't just live in the present – they should actively map the future they want, share that vision in all their communications, and invite everyone to participate and help make it happen. Cities that talked actively about their futures and how they wanted to improve different aspects of their municipality saw much higher engagement than those who did not communicate it clearly. Out of the ten plans we reviewed, seven of the plans talked about being future-looking as part of not just raising engagement, but also optimism.



## WEBSITE & ONLINE TOOLS

At an International Economic Development Council (IEDC) conference in 2014, a panel was asked to offer its feedback on marketing tactics that are most successful. All stressed that a good website was a community's most important business recruitment tool. Specifically, they stated three main things to consider for website design: speed, ease of navigation and useful data. In addition, 322 location advisors cited in a survey at the same conference that information on available incentives and workforce statistics were the most useful features of an economic development organization's (EDO) website. West Chicago's current website delivers on all three of these aspects and has been cited by residents that were surveyed by MCG as a hit, as far as online communication. The website could benefit from better organization of topics of most interest to businesses and prospective businesses, as well as additional compelling graphics and information related to all business corridors.

**Twitter:** Twitter is an important tool that allows for instant news updates that are sent in real time. The City's current effort is doing just that and is meeting the goals of informing its residents on newsworthy items. The biggest missed opportunity with this platform is engaging with influencers. The City should invest time in creating lists of local journalists, City government officials and other influencers to follow and engage with in order to build positive relationships and truly utilize Twitter to its fullest potential.

**Facebook:** MCG recommends that the City should start a Facebook page, based both on resident feedback and on emerging trends in cities nationwide. A full Plan on how to employ this strategy will be located in the Appendix of this Plan, as well as tips on crisis management, as there is a high likelihood of residents engaging in inflammatory or controversial comments and conversations on the page. Despite this, we still recommend having a page as the positives outweigh the negatives and our plan of action will outline how to manage comments without 24/7 monitoring and community management.

**Instagram:** MCG also recommends starting an Instagram channel that would be populated by City residents, visitors and local celebrities sending their photos to be featured. This would be a great way for residents to engage with the City and for the City to share some of the most compelling materials out there. In the Appendix, we will include a procedure for Instagram as well.

## MEDIA RELATIONS

A proactive approach to generating positive media about West Chicago is necessary to counter some of the negative impressions that have developed over the years. By focusing on establishing relationships with regional media, West Chicago can generate favorable news coverage of its development potential, increase coverage around new, progressive City programs or services, or tout the regional benefits to potential businesses and residents that are considering relocating.

In addition to proactive media relations, the City should invest in creating a "media center" on the website that is easy to navigate and has easy access for media members to obtain the latest information outside of just press releases. This information could be rich video, photos and other fact sheets and FAQs about the City. This should be developed as a press kit as well that lives outside of the website and that can electronically be sent as a PDF to media when pitching West Chicago.

# PR TACTICS

**PR Tactics:** According to research, engaged residents are more satisfied residents. Below are tactics that will engage residents in a proactive way to not only garner media attention, but also create positive activities that represent the City well and make it an enticing place to live. The ideas presented here are ideas that have worked in other cities of similar size. City staff and MCG will work together during the first contract year to determine when best to focus the City's marketing and communications efforts and determine who does what.

In addition to the below tactics, the City should consider forming a "Citizen Corps" or "West Chicago Ambassadors Program." These City representatives would serve on a volunteer basis and would ideally be people with a passion for the City who want to interact with both new and current residents. They could represent the City of West Chicago as a neighborly place where citizens take it upon themselves to help one another. In cities such as Franklin, Wisconsin, these citizens help the elderly by providing rides to doctors or help the youth through after school reading programs or other homework help initiatives. The programs that have been successful clearly outline the duties volunteers would be expected to fulfill and let them choose those duties that they are passionate about and where they are willing to make a change. The formation of these Ambassadors would allow the City to use some extra resources while also giving its residents a chance to participate in City matters and showcase some pride in their hometown.

The key to this Program is that these volunteers would be available during set times for citizens who may feel more comfortable speaking to them about how to navigate City services, programs, special events, etc., rather than the City. Ideally, the Latino volunteers would work with the City's Community Outreach Coordinator and help on critical matters where additional support may be needed.

Additionally, these volunteers can be involved in City events to serve as an extra pair of hands and help welcome attendees to the City. During City Orientations (recommended in this Plan), these volunteers could speak about their positive experiences with West Chicago. Each Ambassador would receive a City t-shirt that designates them as an Ambassador and a special letter signed by the Mayor thanking them for their service with possibly a City pin or some other commemorative item that would draw participation in the program.

## Elevator Pitch Messaging for Various Audiences:

### • Residential Relocations

West Chicago is a prominent commercial center and a major employment hub within DuPage County and the suburban Chicago region. A place where diversity meets a friendly neighborhood feel, the City has much to offer from business opportunities, great schools and a walkable community dedicated to general wellness of its population.

### • Economic Development Efforts

West Chicago is a prominent commercial center and a major employment hub within DuPage County and the suburban Chicago region. With five defined business districts, tailored to every need, the City brings about tremendous opportunity for both existing and emerging businesses.

### • Visitor and Tourism Programming

From parks to open spaces, bike trails and a history so iconic dating back to railroad days, West Chicago is a must-see when visiting the greater Chicago area. Between beautiful scenery, a rich Latino culture and the neighborly Midwestern town feel, West Chicago is a destination guaranteed to please both the family and a single person embarking on an adventure.

### • Latino Population

With one of the longest traditions of Latino immigration and diversity in Illinois, West Chicago has been called home by the Latino population for decades. In addition, the neighborly feel and diverse neighbors, West Chicago is so committed to the Latino population that the City bodes a Latino Outreach Coordinator tasked with making the experience for West Chicago Latinos even more welcoming and enjoyable.

### • Current Residents

West Chicago is a hometown community embodied by images of Main Street parades, local high school sports, hardworking families, and knowing your neighbor. With a longstanding tradition of diversity, this is a town that offers something for everyone, while providing its residents with a variety of ways to live better, recreate more and be proud of their hometown.



**Below are additional PR tactics for the City of West Chicago to consider:**

**• Quarterly focus groups with City residents**

Give residents a voice and host meetings where their input is captured and they get a chance to network with one another. They may feel more comfortable and be more transparent with a consultant running the focus groups than a City official who might take criticism personally.

**• Targeted promoted articles for Millennials about homeownership and affordability in West Chicago**

Placing promoted articles, infographics and listicles in newspapers and other digital avenues where millennials are active to gain knowledge on how affordable West Chicago actually is.

**• Targeted promoted articles about great commuting/train options in West Chicago TTT (take the train)**

In the similar vein of promoted articles for millennial readers, advertising the benefits, convenience and high quality of West Chicago's public transportation.

**• Creating a yearly editorial calendar for press coverage**

Having a proactive way to reach press is critical as a PR tool and tactic. Creating an editorial calendar tied to seasonal activities, upcoming initiatives and predictable community news will feed both media relations and city communications platforms. Creation of such calendar will require brainstorming by the communications department and outside consultants to ensure newsworthiness and identify appropriate spokespersons.

**• Consider "hometown newspaper" with feature articles written by residents**

With residents who are so responsive to current programming, engaging them by allowing them to submit to a hometown paper would raise those engagement levels and also create a lot of pride for the City. The newspaper would be distributed electronically and snippets would be able to be shared via social media.

**• Create "Homeowner of the Month" program and "home pride" guide to " promote and recognize responsible homeownership in West Chicago**

Submit a call for City residents who feel are "master" homeowners to submit stories and tips on best way to keep a

garden, take care of the yard, or any other applicable household responsibility. Allow people to nominate their friends, families or neighbors. Promote monthly winners through a yard sign designating them as "Homeowner of the Month" and publicize through owned media platforms. This would serve as an exchange of ideas amongst residents and help the younger and more inexperienced homeowners get a sense of community.

**• Influencer Campaign**

Identify important influencers in media, realty, Latino community and business community and conduct an outreach campaign to engage them in the City's rebranding efforts. Tactics can include hosting open houses, desk-side visits, or blogging event to showcase West Chicago.

**• How well do you know West Chicago BuzzFeed style quiz**

Produce a 15 question quiz about West Chicago's history and current state and distribute via email blasts and social media. Encourage residents to fill out the fun quiz and share via social media outlets.

**• Mini-documentary of West Chicago to be shared with the media and played in City Hall**

Create a series of videos about West Chicago that can be turned into a documentary that will be shared across social media, played in City Hall and used to pitch media. This video can also be used for recruiting purposes and placed on the website to increase SEO and positive associations with West Chicago.

**• City Scavenger Hunt**

Place various items around key holiday times around the city for residents to take pictures of and interact with. For residents who have found all of the sites, they receive a special prize from the City, such as restaurant gift certificates.

**• Experiential Events**

Surround all with promotion, publicity, and postings to community calendars. Use these events as opportunities to harvest content for social platforms, pitching and web property. (see Section 14 for details on events)