

WEST CHICAGO STRATEGIC PLAN

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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
You Spoke. We Listened.	10
The Plan	12
Economic Development	14
Community Identity	44
Intergovernmental Partnership	56
One West Chicago	66
Implementation	80



INTRODUCTION

West Chicago is a hometown community embodied by images of Main Street parades, local high school sports, hardworking families, and knowing your neighbors. With its roots in the 19th Century and one of the longest traditions of Latino immigration and diversity in Illinois, West Chicago's history predates much of DuPage County and more closely resembles other Fox River railroad cities and other manufacturing towns throughout the Midwest.

West Chicago possesses a strong community fabric and is home to a wide range of strategic strengths and assets. But much of the strategic planning discussion about West Chicago's place in the 21st Century appears captured by constant comparisons to its immediate neighbors, such as Wheaton, St. Charles, Geneva, and Naperville, for example. These comparisons seem to be focused on what West Chicago lacks in contrast to these other towns, although these other communities share little in common with West Chicago's history and are more reflective of 1990s, auto-oriented, suburban DuPage County expansion. Simply, much of the discussion appears to assess what West Chicago thinks it lacks, instead of what is fundamentally unique and advantageous about who it is.





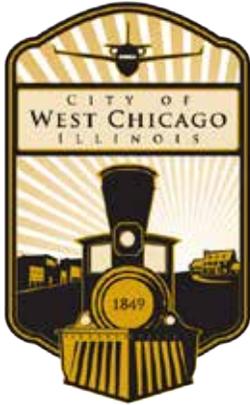
The central question for this strategic planning effort appears to be how does West Chicago take its century-old history, traditions, and successful community model and adjust, adapt, and modernize it for continued prosperity in the 21st Century?

A central component to that answer must be defining success for West Chicago. How does the town modernize strategically, but do it in a way that's appropriately "West Chicago" in character. West Chicago's definition of success should not be based on comparing itself to arbitrary benchmarks from its immediate neighbors because it is convenient. Success will be determined by achieving West Chicago's own vision and goals, which must carry an appreciation for the distinctive community it already is today.

As an established community West Chicago already has the foundations of any successful community – attractive neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces; quality schools; community facilities and special events; a robust transportation network; and multiple business districts and major employers. But West Chicago is also faced with some unique challenges. The City is hemmed in by a variety of unique land uses, ranging from the DuPage County Airport, Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, and a collection of County forest preserves, and land conservancies, all of which isolate West Chicago from the rest of the suburban landscape. Further complicating planning efforts and public sector budgets is the fact much of this acreage does not pay any property taxes, which places additional burden on homeowners and working families.

That said, the opportunities are clear. West Chicago is at a juncture where there is growing interest from younger generations that see the community for its strengths and its distinctiveness. The City needs to build from this foundation of strengths and assets but do so in a way that modernizes and updates the community to meet the needs, desires, and preferences of the next generation. This will occur slowly over time and be incremental in nature. But taking those first small steps will be more effective with an eye on the long-term destination. The West Chicago Strategic Plan contains a vision and set of guiding principles that work to navigate the community through this transition.





WHAT IS THE WEST CHICAGO STRATEGIC PLAN?

The West Chicago Strategic Plan charts a new course for the West Chicago community. It is not an internal, municipal document. It is a collective vision for the entire community and details a variety of actions that can be implemented by everyone to improve their community -- from neighborhood groups to business leaders, other taxing bodies to religious organizations. Input was solicited and received from dozens of partner entities as well as hundreds of residents.

Although this is a community plan calling for community leadership in a number of key areas, the plan is ultimately still the outcome of a planning process initiated and led by the City of West Chicago. Throughout the document, goals, objectives, and action items are noted when it is intended for the City to play a leadership or contributing role, but where it cannot necessarily "own" an idea from this plan. Jurisdictional authority is an important dynamic for implementation, and ultimately the City can only do so much. Being a community plan this document identifies opportunities to solve community issues through community partnerships. However, an appropriate and realistic role for the City of West Chicago as a municipality is noted, when appropriate.

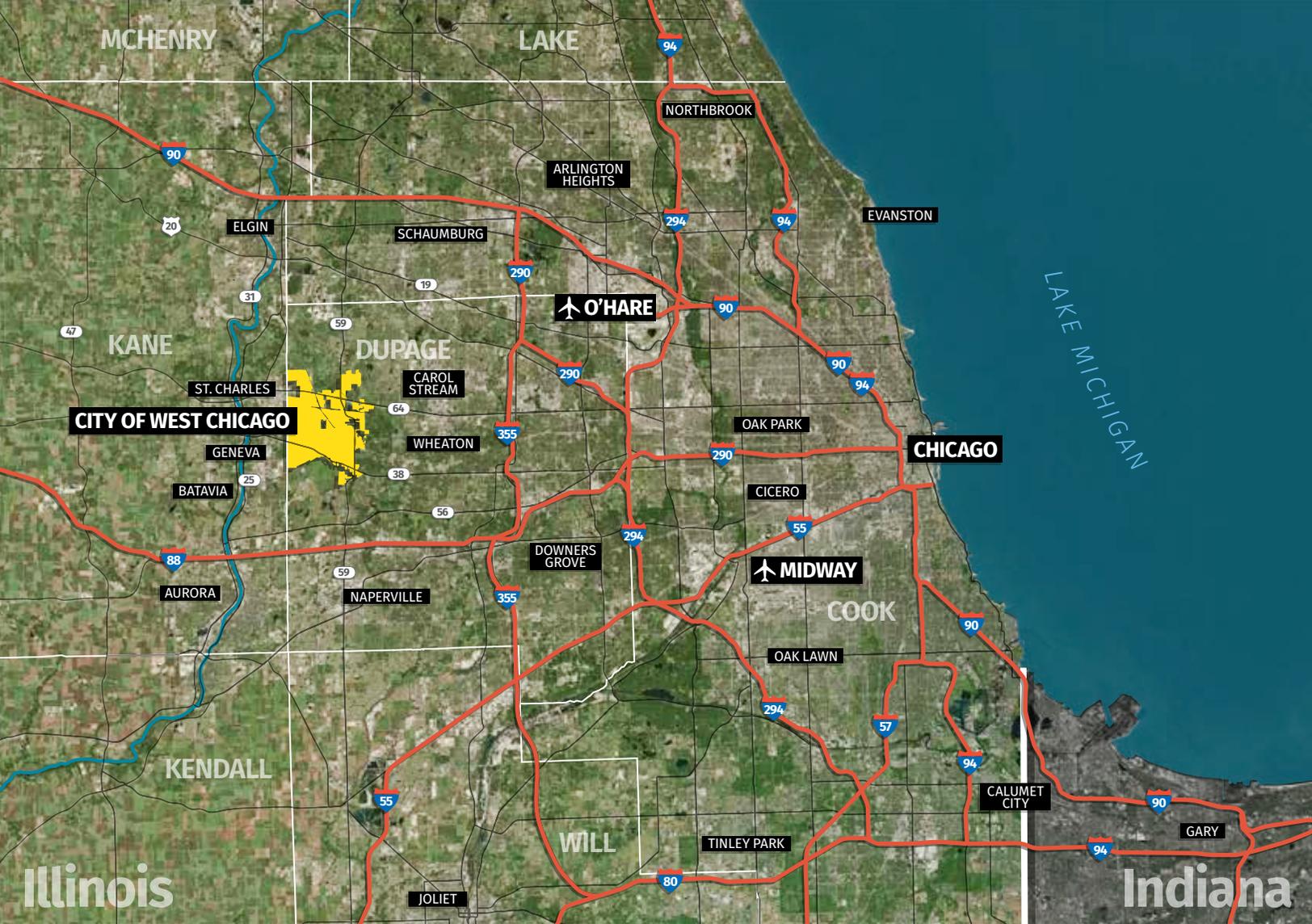
WHAT DOES THE WEST CHICAGO STRATEGIC PLAN DO?

The Strategic Plan DOES...

- ◆ Establishes a shared vision for West Chicago's future
- ◆ Focuses resources and efforts on four big topics: Economic Development, Community Image, Intergovernmental Partnerships, and Celebrating Diversity (One West Chicago)
- ◆ Serves as a forum for cross-jurisdictional and cross-discipline partnerships
- ◆ Changes the conversation on West Chicago for the better

The Strategic Plan DOES NOT...

- ◆ Dictate to other organizations or taxing bodies how they should spend their money
- ◆ Override internal strategic plans or documents produced by other organizations
- ◆ Force any participating entity to relinquish its jurisdiction or authority



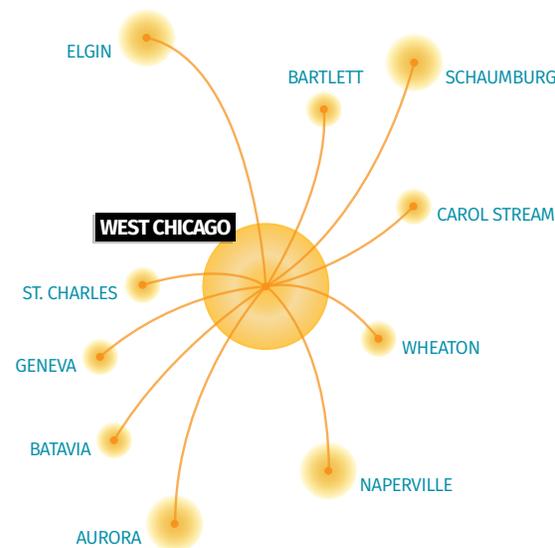
A Small Town in the Suburbs

West Chicago sits within DuPage County, roughly 30 miles west of Chicago’s Loop. More than 750,000 people live within a 10 mile radius of Downtown West Chicago.

West Chicago is a suburb of Chicago, but not by its own making. Founded as a railroad town in 1855, the community is a distinctive small-town with historic roots that sits in the midst of newer western suburbs.

While West Chicago has seen suburban style development patterns in the northern part of the community, the City has preserved a “town-like” sense of place and identity, with historic homes, tree-lined streets, community events, and a central Main Street.

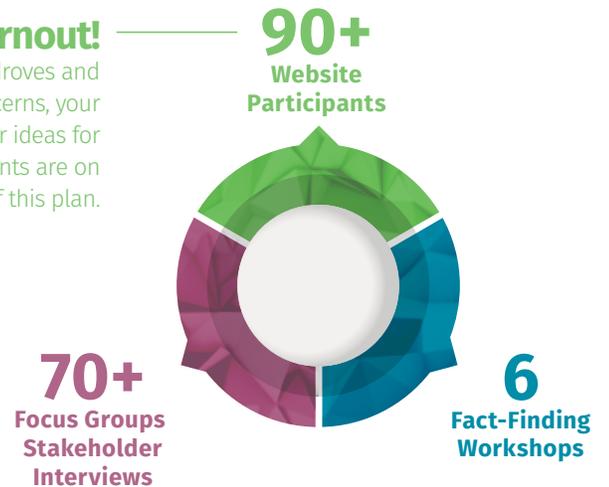
Residents see West Chicago as a microcosm of 21st century America: racially and ethnically diverse, primarily middle-class but with a range of income levels, and possessing eclectic housing inventory that ranges from small starter homes to historic homes to large suburban style homes.



You Spoke. We Listened.

Over the course of nine months, the planning process for the West Chicago Strategic Plan engaged residents from all walks of life. Special emphasis was placed on reaching traditionally underrepresented groups, including youth and Latinos. From the beginning, it was recognized that all residents should have a voice in the process.

Fantastic Turnout!
You came out by the droves and shared your concerns, your aspirations, and your ideas for change. Your fingerprints are on every page of this plan.



OUTREACH TIMELINE



WHAT WERE THE **BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS?**

- ◆ Residents cherish its historic character, railroad ties, mom-and-pop businesses, and sense of community.
- ◆ Generally residents were proud of living in West Chicago. However, constant comparison to wealthy neighboring communities saps the community's many positives and distinctive characteristics.
- ◆ A sizable gap exists between what residents see in West Chicago and what others say about it.
- ◆ Residents see a divide between White and Latino populations. It is not perceived to be a result of disinterest or hostility, but more of an uncertainty of how to engage and interact with one another in the face of different customs and languages.
- ◆ Latinos are underrepresented in West Chicago's civic life.
- ◆ West Chicago's diversity is one of the community's greatest assets. Many also believed the community is "afraid to say it's our strength" and promote it.
- ◆ People want to see Downtown serve as a classic community center, but there is frustration that it has not materialized. The overall development vision is for a walkable, mixed-use district like many other downtowns anchored by a Metra station, and there is a sense of urgency that the City needs to be more assertive in pursuing and incentivizing that vision.
- ◆ Due to the timing, there was a lot of concern expressed about losing General Mills. However, it appears the general sentiment with this particular example captures a bigger picture concern that West Chicago's past success has been partially grounded in having a balance of residential areas and industrial employment areas. For some residents they feel the long-term viability of these plants is unsure.
- ◆ Residents cited the hundreds of undeveloped acres and infill redevelopment sites in proximity to the CN and UP railroads as well as the airport as key growth opportunities.
- ◆ West Chicago's local business community is generally strong and small restaurants and retailers thrive, however, it is believed that many if not most tend to cater to the Latino community.
- ◆ West Chicago is seen as a "pass through" community, meaning that although it has three major highway corridors, motorists tend to be traveling from Point A to Point B, with West Chicago rarely a destination. This undermines the market's interest in development of new retail or restaurant square footage.
- ◆ Although not accurate, a common opinion expressed was that the City of West Chicago has been passive and unengaged in economic development activities.
- ◆ The Metra station is a significantly underutilized asset in West Chicago.
- ◆ Walking in West Chicago can be very difficult for pedestrians.
- ◆ West Chicago is not commonly viewed throughout the region as a recreational bicycling hub, but it should be due to its strategic location and trail access.
- ◆ Some participants reported that the ideas and solutions in West Chicago are clear, but that the community's elected officials are generally conservative and somewhat risk adverse, and as a result few new projects are actually pursued and fully implemented.
- ◆ West Chicago offers its students a quality education, however, a stigma about the public schools dominates the conversation, particularly in surrounding communities.
- ◆ Intergovernmental coordination in West Chicago is very important because the community is fragmented by a number of public agencies and school districts. Further, participants expressed a desire to see more creative public-private partnerships and community-based initiatives supported by these formal government entities. The general sentiment appears to be that although all of the agencies and entities agree that improved coordination is a goal, it is not as frequently executed.
- ◆ The existing parks and recreation offerings within West Chicago are viewed positively. Residents perceive three specific opportunities to increase recreational opportunities within West Chicago: more soccer fields, more trails and paths, and the addition of smaller "pocket parks".
- ◆ One of the most universal sentiments expressed throughout the four month outreach process was the desire for more community festivals and events. Such programming could serve multiple purposes: attract positive attention to the community, provide a social space to "bring the community together," promote small businesses, and draw people to Downtown.

THE PLAN

Our Strategic Vision

After more than a century, West Chicago's roots and community foundations are still solid and the community is well positioned for the future. The central challenge for West Chicago over the next ten years is beginning to take the actions and make the investments needed to modernize and update the community to meet the needs of the next generation. That means some things will change. But West Chicago still should build on its existing strengths and remain true to its heritage. There are core values and guiding principles that define who West Chicago is as a community, regardless of era – past, present, or future.

Many of these first steps have already been taken by the City of West Chicago, and residents did recognize many of those efforts. Progress is underway. Outreach participants acknowledged how far the West Chicago community has come in 20 years. However there is an emphasis on pushing further and envisioning who and what West Chicago could be 20 years into the future.

West Chicago does feature certain constraints, limitations, and unique conditions, such as being surrounded by so much land that cannot be developed or taxed, but it still has untapped potential and clear opportunities. One of the fundamental elements of taking this strategic approach is acknowledging the best benchmarks and recognize that genuine comparable communities are probably not West Chicago's neighbors. West Chicago needs to understand its local complexity, its history, and model efforts off of best practices from small, traditional cities that more closely reflect the town's experience. Success will be determined by achieving West Chicago's own vision and goals, which must carry an appreciation for the distinctive community it already is today.

That said, the opportunities are clear. Looking forward West Chicago needs to strategically plan for the modernization and reinvestment of its Downtown, its readily available office, industrial, and employment parks, its major highway and shopping center corridors, its historic neighborhoods, and its community facilities and parks, while diversifying its local employment base with new, smaller, and entrepreneurial businesses in emerging sectors. It must do so by forging a collaborative network of government agencies, community institutions, and local businesses and developers all focused on a clear set of strategic priorities.

From there, West Chicago actually presents a community well-suited for the next generation and aligned with emerging consumer trends. Its historic, walkable core anchored by a traditional, transit-fed Downtown, wrapped by a wide range of affordable housing and vintage, leafy neighborhoods, supported by a diverse, multi-generational community appears to serve a large segment of the population and provide the attributes an increasing number of families are seeking, particularly among Millennials.

Our Plan

This is where the rubber meets the road: the plan itself. West Chicago's Strategic Plan focuses on four big ideas: taking a more proactive approach to economic development, owning our community character and promoting our successes to improve our image in the Chicago region, launching a new era of continued and elevated intergovernmental collaboration, and embracing our diversity in new ways that brings the West Chicago community together like never before.

We must be realistic – achieving our ultimate goals may take decades. But this Strategic Plan creates a framework of actions, policies, investments, and recommendations that can be implemented to move the needle **starting tomorrow**. This plan is action-oriented, measurable, and built around clear near-term outcomes. The plan is structured around near-term actions with an eye towards the long view.

Our Priorities

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Elevate West Chicago's competitive position as one of the prominent commercial centers and major employment hubs within DuPage County and the suburban Chicago region.

PAGE
14

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Enhance West Chicago's image within DuPage County and the suburban Chicago region including elevating its distinct sense of place and community character.

PAGE
44

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

Maximize the community's public resources by elevating the intergovernmental partnerships among stakeholders in West Chicago.

PAGE
56

ONE WEST CHICAGO

Broaden participation in community leadership and invest in relationships to form partnerships with all members of the community to reinforce that there is One West Chicago, made stronger by its diversity.

PAGE
66

Our Values

Take Pride. Be an ambassador for this community. Take pride in West Chicago for everything it is, stop focusing on what it isn't, and let's tell our story to the Chicago-land region.

Embrace Diversity. West Chicago has always been a diverse community and that is part of what makes it unique and so great. Embrace our cultural diversity and celebrate our distinctiveness.

Target our Strengths. We can't fix every problem, as much as we may want to. West Chicago needs to be strategic and play to our strengths through targeted actions and maximize our potential.

Commit to Cooperation & Collaboration. We can address our issues more effectively as a big team than we can individually. Continue our commitment to working together in proactive cooperation and collaboration across West Chicago.

The Smalltown in the Suburbs. West Chicago is not a traditional suburb and we do not want to be. We're a classic Main Street hometown with a rich history and established local culture. Own who we are as West Chicagoans and recognize why it stands out in Chicago-land against its peers.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Elevate West Chicago's competitive position as one of the prominent commercial centers and major employment hubs within DuPage County and the suburban Chicago region.

Economic Development

1

Invest in and launch a robust, proactive economic development program, led by the City, that partners with the business and real estate development community to promote West Chicago as a place to invest in a range of commercial and industrial uses, and build an entrepreneurial spirit.

2

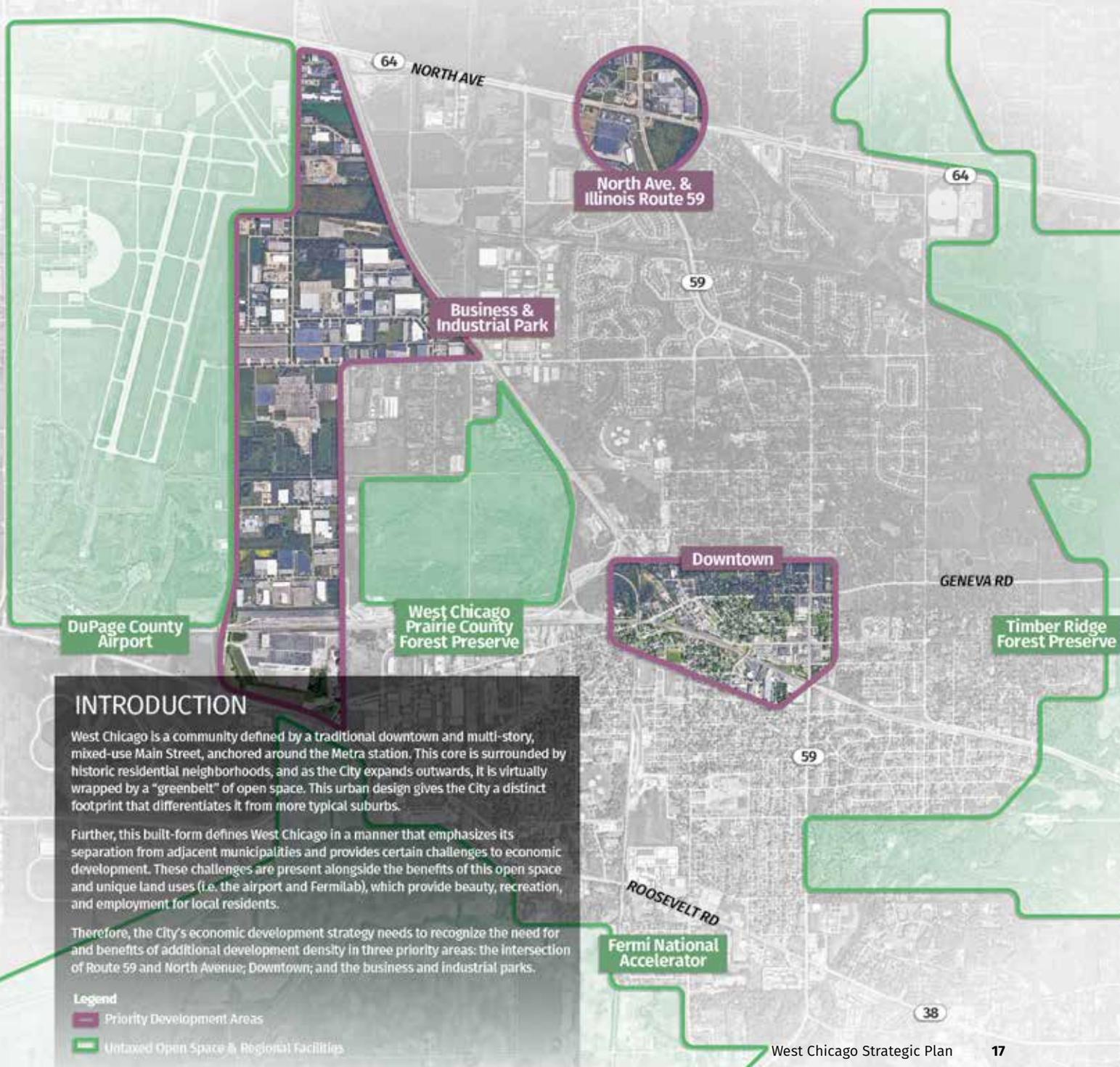
Establish targeted investment and economic development strategies for each area of the City's five defined business districts, tailored to corridor and site-specific conditions.

Introduction

West Chicago has a diverse, complex local economy matched by a diversity of business districts. The City features a traditional Downtown, three commercial corridors along major highways, and a series of office and industrial parks. West Chicago has historically been a hub of employment anchored by its historic Main Street and it remains competitive today. However, despite featuring a number of retail nodes and corridors, the City has struggled to support this type of development in recent years. The City is at a crossroads where a high-level economic development strategy is needed, but which should be deployed through a series of corridor and site-specific investment strategies.

West Chicago is a unique community because although it is centrally located and adjacent to a lot of suburban population density (and some of the highest disposable incomes in the Chicago region), its local development pattern has inhibited some economic stability. The community's trade area is limited because West Chicago is largely surrounded by forest preserves, Fermilab, and the DuPage County Airport. Although this "greenbelt" of open space presents the community with benefits, West Chicago lacks the population density within this sphere to exclusively support its own businesses; and unfortunately West Chicago residents ultimately fall within the trade areas of adjacent and neighboring business districts, such as Randall Road, that siphons economic activity away from the heart of West Chicago. Although challenging, this dynamic is not insurmountable.

The City of West Chicago is at a point in its history where a focused, 5-year economic development strategy will effectively reposition its real estate to be the most economically competitive it can be over the next generation. This strategy needs to contain a series of programs that address both how the City of West Chicago adds resources to its economic development efforts, as well as targeted physical improvements and infrastructure investments. The strategy is both policy-oriented and site-specific. And both components should be implemented in partnership with the business community.



INTRODUCTION

West Chicago is a community defined by a traditional downtown and multi-story, mixed-use Main Street, anchored around the Metra station. This core is surrounded by historic residential neighborhoods, and as the City expands outwards, it is virtually wrapped by a “greenbelt” of open space. This urban design gives the City a distinct footprint that differentiates it from more typical suburbs.

Further, this built-form defines West Chicago in a manner that emphasizes its separation from adjacent municipalities and provides certain challenges to economic development. These challenges are present alongside the benefits of this open space and unique land uses (i.e. the airport and Fermilab), which provide beauty, recreation, and employment for local residents.

Therefore, the City’s economic development strategy needs to recognize the need for and benefits of additional development density in three priority areas: the intersection of Route 59 and North Avenue; Downtown; and the business and industrial parks.

- Legend**
- Priority Development Areas
 - Untaxed Open Space & Regional Facilities

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Invest in and launch a robust, proactive economic development program, led by the City of West Chicago, which partners with the business and real estate development community to promote West Chicago as a place to invest in a range of commercial and industrial uses, and build an entrepreneurial spirit.

The Approach

The City of West Chicago should position itself as more proactive in terms of business recruitment, retention, and expansion as part of regular operations. This approach will require clear roles and responsibilities for City staff, elected and appointed officials, business association groups, and appropriate chamber of commerce. This new model will function, in effect, as a “West Chicago sales force,” and will be most effective through iterative collaborations that leverage the strengths each sector brings to the table.

The most effective foundational approach to establishing municipal economic development activities is creating and managing an ongoing business recruitment, retention, and expansion program. Recruitment activities can vary based on a variety of factors, but retention and expansion programs (B|R+E) tend to be more consistent.

B|R+E Programs

Business retention and expansion programs begin with the recognition that as high as 86% of new jobs and capital investment is generated from existing employers, and likewise in many cases, new retail and restaurant activity directly stems from local business expansion. The importance of ongoing, institutionalized retention and expansion programs cannot be understated, and in many cases they are staffed and led by municipalities in their respective communities.

Business retention and expansion programs generally aim to manage seven core goals:

- ◆ Build strong relationships between public officials and business leaders.
- ◆ Demonstrate the support and commitment of public agencies towards the local business community and establish active collaboration.
- ◆ Identify problems impacting the business community.
- ◆ Identify specific problems impacting an individual business or commercial/industrial property.
- ◆ Identify business sectors and specific companies at risk of downsizing or closing entirely.
- ◆ Identify business sectors and specific companies with the need or potential to grow and expand in the existing municipality.
- ◆ Help facilitate ongoing land use, development, and growth management planning.

What is an Economic Development Task Force?

An Economic Development Task Force is an advisory body that contains not only City of West Chicago staff and officials, but also a purposeful mix of private sector actors, including developers, property owners, business owners, realtors, listing agents, banks, university employees, various association representatives, and others. They are sometimes also called the Mayor's Council of Economic Advisors.

This group meets regularly to act, in effect, as local economists who are experts on West Chicago's development trends and potential. Further, the group can assist in identifying priorities and advising on what course of action the City should take, if any at all. These entities can be an important part of monitoring and managing a municipal-led economic development program by regularly tapping into the experience, expertise, and real-time knowledge of the community's business and development leaders.

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Who (or what) Are The IEDEC/ICSC?

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a membership-based non-profit organization that helps developers promote economic well-being and quality of life for their communities. They aim to create retail and expand jobs to facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base in communities across the world.

The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) is a trade organization for the international shopping center industry. The organization aims to advance the shopping center industry by providing educational programs and publications in all aspects of shopping center development, conducting meetings, collecting and disseminating information, developing and maintaining professional certification programs, advocating the interests of the shopping center industry, and publicizing to the general public.

These goals are achieved through what is known as a “data-to-action” approach, anchored by three key functions; these functions must be institutionalized, resourced, and managed as part of regular, ongoing municipal operations. Those functions are (1) regular business site visitation meetings, (2) the collection and examination of standardized survey-generated data that is fed into a business monitoring and tracking system, and (3) the use of these efforts to make strategic decisions, overseen by an Economic Development Task Force and executed by municipal staff.

Retention and expansion efforts can also directly inform business recruitment activities as well as City policy, land use planning, and capital infrastructure programming more broadly as part of general municipal strategic planning. These efforts represent the “heart and soul” of municipal-led economic development programming.

West Chicago has a vibrant local economy and has been a center of employment for decades. These local jobs help support the City’s housing market, its retail and restaurant businesses, and lessens the tax burden on homeowners. A critical strategic priority for West Chicago is continually modernizing its competitive position in the regional economy. Entrepreneurship and small business startups are an important economic development goal for the community.

There is often a lot of focus on attracting a big company to the community, but most job growth actually occurs through the expansion of local, existing businesses. West Chicago has long featured major industrial employers, particularly in manufacturing, but it needs to diversify its local economy to remain competitive. Growth industries and sectors can initially be captured by small companies and new startups. West Chicago needs to identify ways to attract and support these entrepreneurs.

Action Items

1. The City should consider drafting and adopting a formal 5-year economic development strategy, including evaluating policy statements on the use of a variety of public incentives and development tools.
2. The City should continue to actively participate in the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) and the City could consider encouraging at least one member of municipal staff to become a Certified Economic Developer (CECD).
3. The City should establish a formal business retention and expansion program that provides adequate municipal resources and staffed by City personnel, in partnership with elected and appointed officials and business leaders through an Economic Development Task Force.
4. The City's business retention and expansion program should directly include the Economic Development Task Force, which should be responsible for coordinating with staff on tracking, monitoring, and evaluating the information collected as part of activities. Teams of community representatives, including staff, elected and appointed officials, and business customers, should develop a routinely structured series of business visitation meetings that utilize a standardized survey tool.
5. The City should consider working with the business community to create a dedicated business and development website.
6. The City should continue to partner with existing property and shopping center owners, as well as interested developers, to promote the community through the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) to recruit new retail and restaurant users to the community.
7. The City should continue to directly partner with the DuPage Business Center developer to assist in marketing the development and recruiting users to the employment park.
8. The City should continue to engage with existing local and regional organizations, such as the Small Business Development Center, to formalize and refine entrepreneurship and new business support programs as a component of the City's economic development programming.
9. As part of a long-term employment and development strategy, the City should partner with local and regional organizations, including the College of DuPage Small Business Development Center and Center for Entrepreneurship, Rev3 Innovation Center, along with major economic development entities like Choose DuPage and the DuPage County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to support businesses in emerging employment sectors.

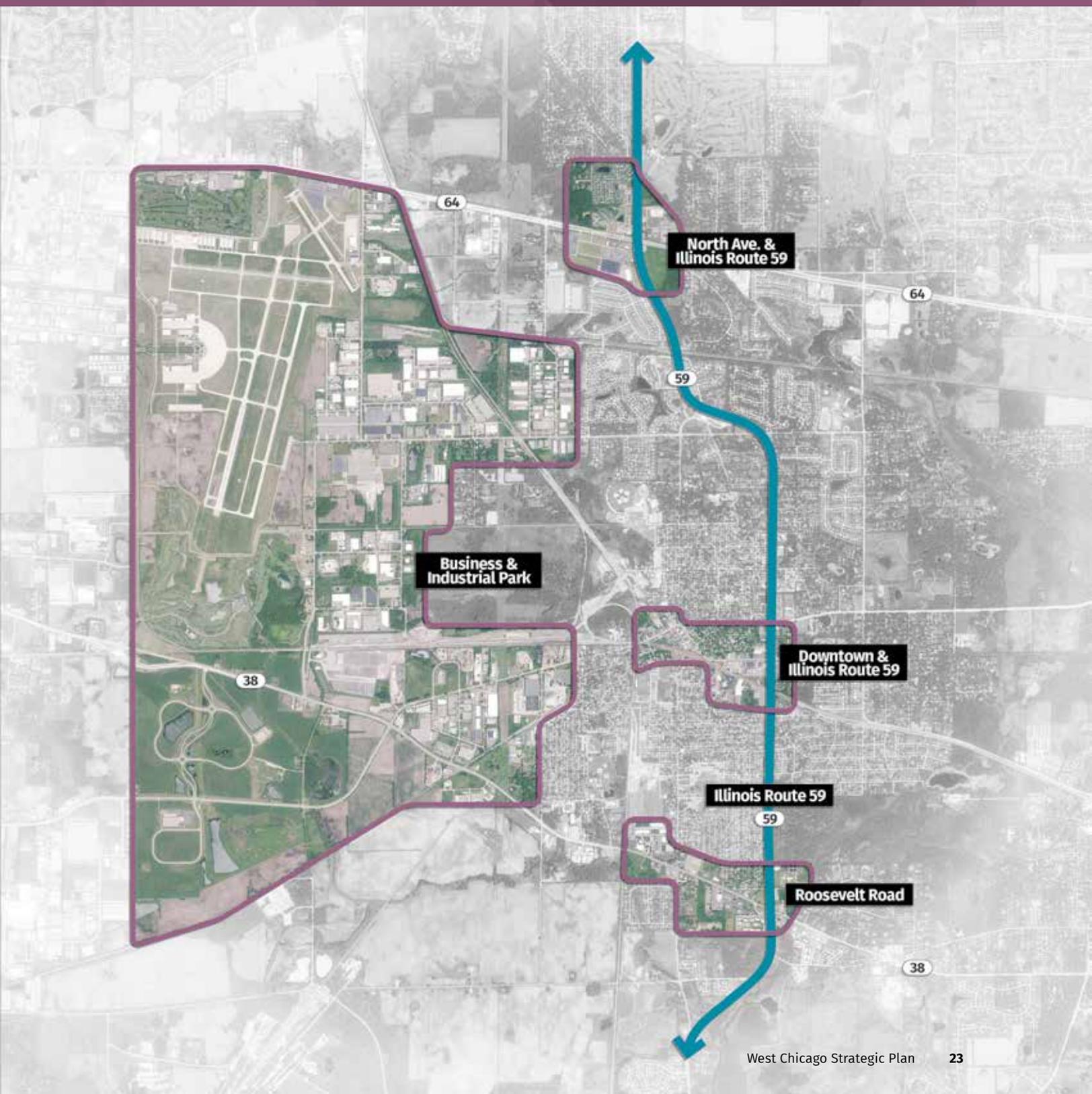
2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Establish targeted investment and economic development strategies for each area of the City's five defined business districts, tailored to corridor and site-specific conditions.

The Approach

The City of West Chicago's business community is defined by five distinct areas. These business districts shape the City's built-form and West Chicago largely functions as a series of five commercial neighborhoods. Each commercial area features its own set of conditions, ranging from urban design elements to real estate economics to business mix.

The City should develop detailed implementation strategies to competitively position each of these five areas for development, redevelopment, and new investment. Through those efforts each commercial area should be reinforced as a distinctive business district that aligns land use planning, zoning, infrastructure investment, corridor branding, and urban design character in a manner that differentiates the district from other parts of West Chicago, as well as other parts of suburban Chicago.



North Ave. & Illinois Route 59

Business & Industrial Park

Downtown & Illinois Route 59

Illinois Route 59

Roosevelt Road

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

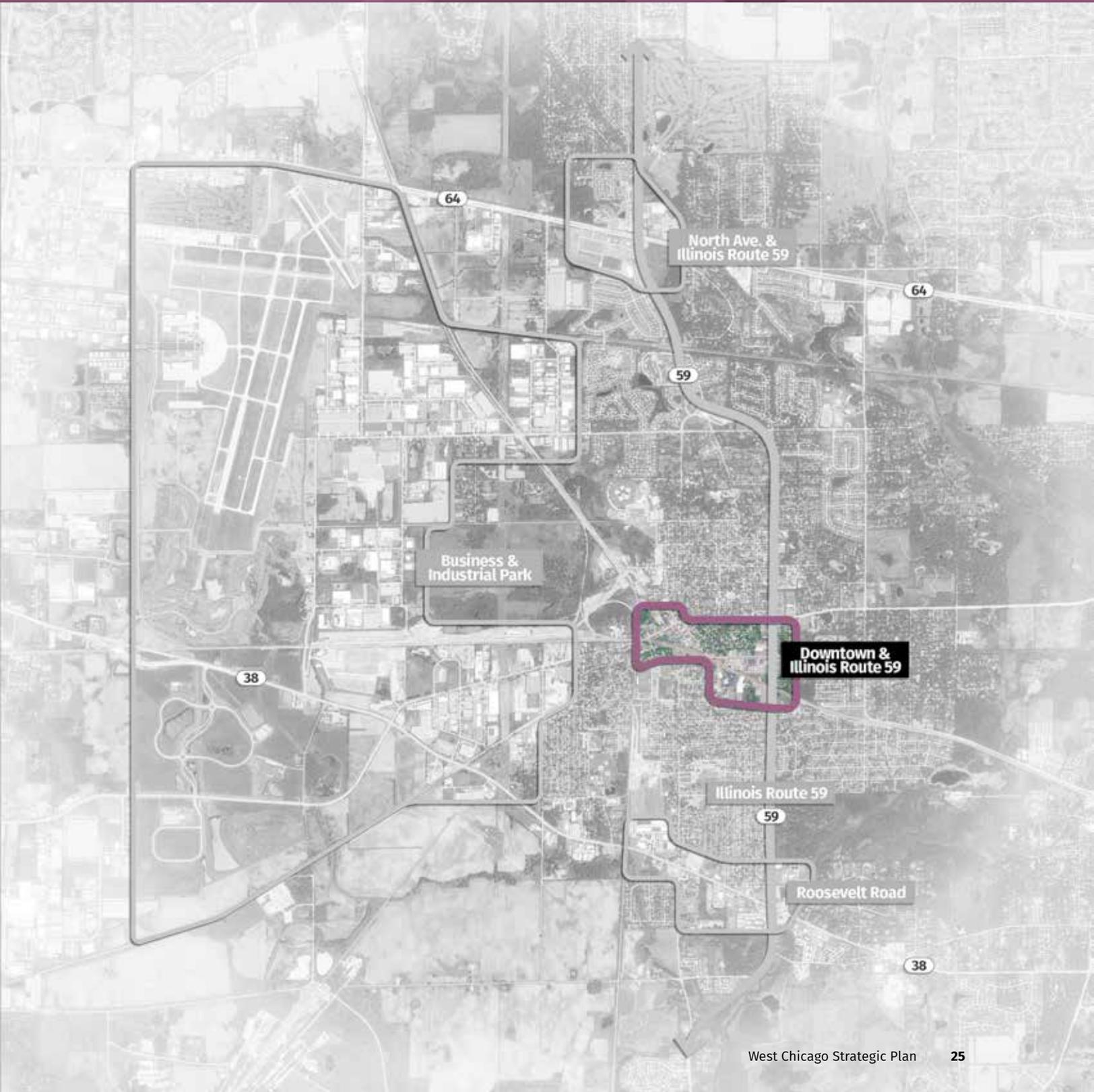
Downtown

West Chicago is not just another suburb – it is a city and a hometown. As a result, its historic central business district – Downtown – is the traditional heart and soul of the community. However, in the 21st Century the community is fragmented, and Downtown no longer serves a role in the lives of West Chicago residents; in fact, some residents prefer to travel to St. Charles, Geneva, Wheaton, and even Naperville when they want to visit a historic, walkable, mixed-use dining and entertainment district. West Chicago's downtown has been characterized as overwhelmingly Hispanic in character, and furthermore, others only see it as a local neighborhood business district – not the central gathering place for the community as a whole. That must change.

Downtown West Chicago is unique because its Main Street is not a U.S. or Illinois highway – this means the City has far greater control over its urban design than most suburban communities. The potential exists to add iconic signage and other streetscaping elements that would really differentiate the area, add a unique sense of place, and create a memorable destination –

but would never be approved by IDOT. Further, in contrast with the ubiquitous nature of riverfront downtown districts in the western suburbs, West Chicago is unique because of its terrain, grade change, and railroad heritage. Furthermore, the community's Latino culture adds another unique, differentiating characteristic that makes it clear a visitor is in a distinct place. West Chicago needs to capitalize on these attributes.

Downtown West Chicago also features a Metra station and some initial, suburban-style transit-oriented development (TOD). However, the potential exists to push this style of infill development even further. There is an increasing interest in the suburban Chicago housing market in traditional, walkable neighborhoods in close proximity to the corner business district, the local park, and community landmarks, while still featuring attractive but affordable housing – and West Chicago clearly has that to offer. The potential exists to invest in a few signature projects over the next 5 to 7 years to serve as catalyst for a generation of downtown investment in West Chicago.



2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

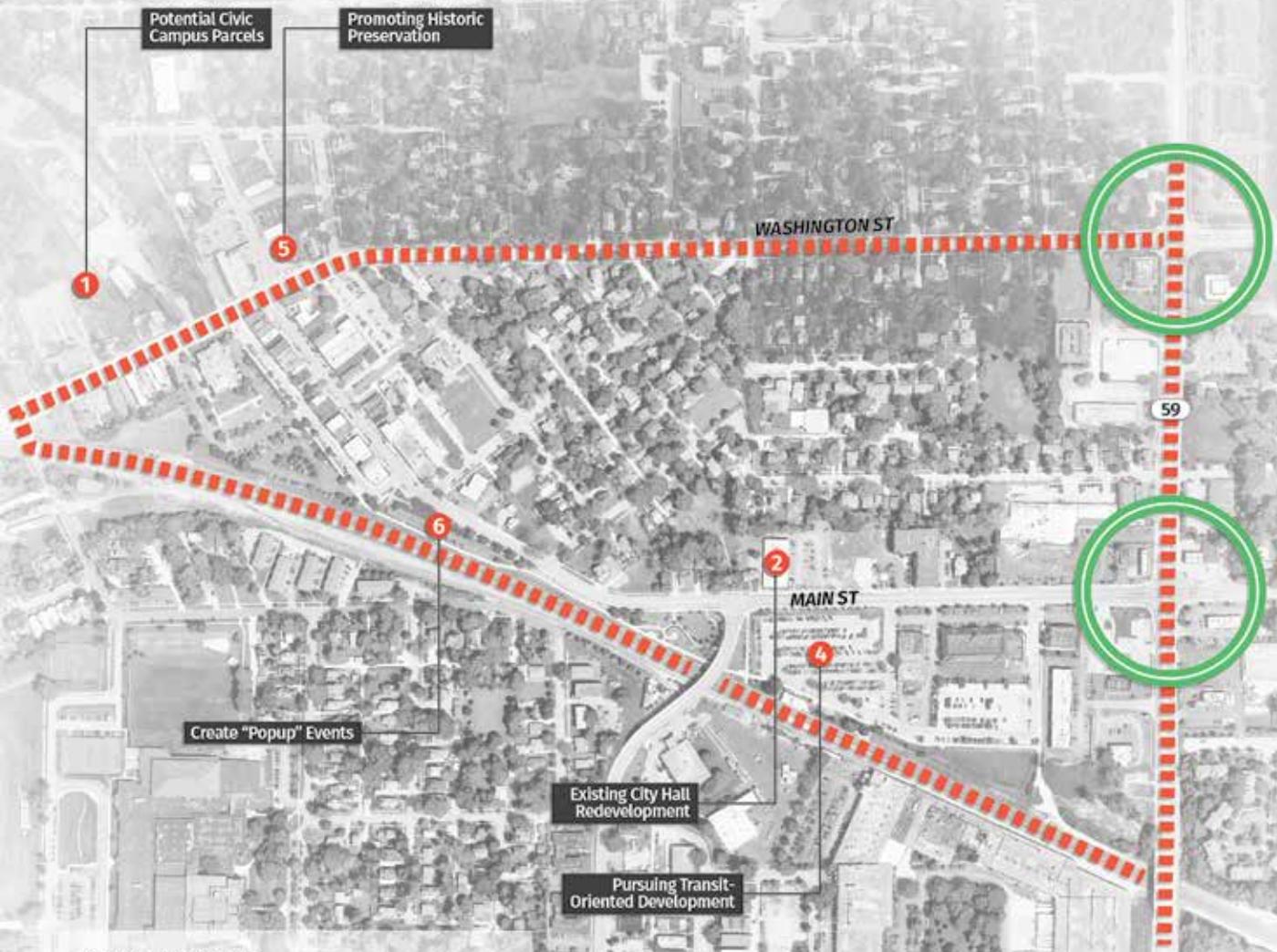
What are popup events and tactical urbanism?

Tactical urbanism is a term used to describe low-cost, temporary changes to the built environment intended to improve local neighborhoods and gathering places. They can activate a space and bring together the community around a one-time event. Examples of types of interventions include: better block initiatives, guerilla gardening, PARK(ing) Day, Depaving, food carts/trucks, open streets, and many more.

The City of Chicago, for example, provides its community with the “Make Way for Play Guide” that was developed in 2013 to help give Chicagoans the tools to maximize the use of the public way and promote active living.

Action Items

- 1** The City should make a final determination on the real estate it owns in Downtown West Chicago; the City could consider selling a portion to a private developer, and/or it build a new, civic campus as a foot traffic anchor for the district. Such a facility should act as more than a traditional 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. government offices building and offer dynamic, flexible public facility space that helps activate downtown 7 days a week during both business hours and at night.
- 2** Should the City vacate the current City Hall, the site should be prioritized and incentivized for infill redevelopment, across from the Metra station, to add greater density to the Downtown neighborhood.
- 3** The City should study the market potential for a small, business-oriented hotel that caters to local employers and the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory located within an infill redevelopment project.
- 4** The City should continue supporting the downtown as a TOD hub by partnering with Metra and other property owners to maximize the available real estate, including parking lots. The City should also consider implementing a bikeshare program and density bonuses to promote West Chicago as one of the most competitive communities on a Metra line in the Chicago suburbs for new infill construction.
- 5** The City should continue to enforce the adopted design guidelines and work to integrate the role of the Preservation Commission with future public improvements.
- 6** The City should work with private local entities to coordinate the creation of a series of tactical urbanism or “popup” events to activate Downtown West Chicago and demonstrate its market viability and character to a wider population.
- 7** The City should target-market Downtown to comparable business districts in its business recruitment and economic development efforts.



DOWNTOWN

Districtwide Improvements

- 3 Hotel Market Analysis
- 7 Prioritize Downtown Development

Legend

- 59 Auto-Oriented Nodes
- District Edges

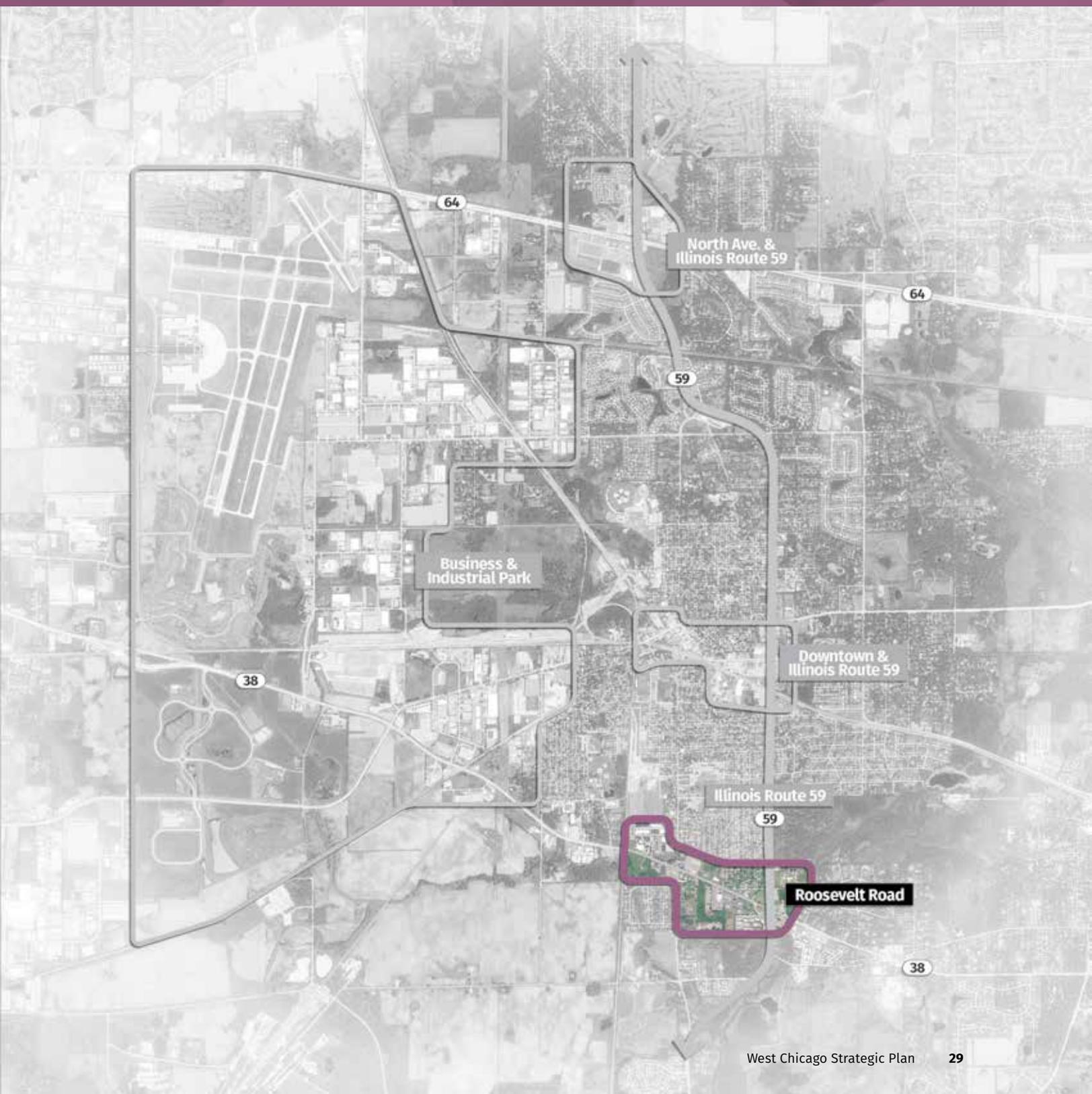
2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Roosevelt Road

Roosevelt Road is Illinois Route 38 and acts as a major arterial highway that connects Glen Ellyn and Wheaton to Geneva and the Fox River Valley. As a result, the corridor is designed to move traffic safely and efficiently throughout the Chicago region; within West Chicago, the business district is largely defined by a substantial interchange and viaduct structure at Illinois Route 59. The Roosevelt Road corridor transitions into a midcentury-style strip retail district before it transitions into a more modern office park at approximately Town Road.

The district still features prominent anchors, such as Jewel-Osco and Haggerty Ford, but it has also experienced disinvestment in recent years and shows signs of aging and obsolescence. Ultimately the Roosevelt Road corridor business district competes for many of the same consumers as Downtown. Although Roosevelt Road features high traffic counts, traveling east and west features limited population density. Roosevelt Road's primary market in the future will likely be motorists as well as business park users to the west, as far as Kirk Road.

The City needs to thoroughly evaluate redevelopment strategies for Roosevelt Road and proactively incentivize infill reinvestment in the corridor. The recently completed roadway improvements on multiple streets in the area provide an opportunity to stimulate new investment, but an economic development vision and strategy for this corridor needs to be determined and established. If West Chicago features a surplus of commercial and retail square footage, it may be more competitive to concentrate such uses at the 59 and Joliet Street intersection, while transitioning mid-block properties to mixed-use, office, and residential uses. Further, many of the existing buildings are set far back from the right-of-way and feature large parking lots; the potential to add outlot buildings and/or increase development density in the corridor may be beneficial.



North Ave. & Illinois Route 59

Business & Industrial Park

Downtown & Illinois Route 59

Illinois Route 59

Roosevelt Road

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

The Benefits of Flexible Parking

Flexible parking improves traditional, “mandatory-minimum” parking requirements based on access to transit, the presence of nearby complementary destinations within walking/biking distance, the potential for shared parking, auto ownership rates of the community, and implementation programs to reduce demand for parking, such as car sharing. Conventional parking requirements have often produced an over-supply of parking, which tends to be dedicated to one individual parcel.

The advantage to setting out these criteria specifically, and allowing these reductions, is that developers will know up front how many spaces they will be expected to provide.

Action Items

- 1 Create and adopt a formal Roosevelt Road corridor Development Plan that details the community’s vision for the area, addresses public infrastructure improvements, and provides subarea and site-specific detail on infill redevelopment strategies.
- 2 Identify certain mid-block parcels and existing buildings that could potentially be targeted for infill redevelopment to transition part of the corridor to a mixed-use, office, and residential land use.
- 3 Examine parking mandatory-minimums and existing businesses in the corridor and identify opportunities to allow for the construction of new outlots on existing sites.
- 4 Examine the potential use of development incentives and special revenue districts to stimulate private investment in the Roosevelt Road corridor.
- 5 Consider establishing a Roosevelt Road corridor overlay district that permits flexible parking and density bonuses in exchange for achieving other redevelopment goals in the corridor.
- 6 Consider working with I-DOT to explore the possibility of investing in a district-branding strategy based on streetscaping that differentiates the established Roosevelt Road business district from the industrial and business park properties that begin west of the BNSF railroad tracks.



ROOSEVELT ROAD

Districtwide Improvements

- 1 Draft a Corridor Development Plan
- 4 Review the Potential Use of Development Incentives
- 6 Consider District-Branding & Streetscaping

Legend

- Gateways
- Streetscaping & Branding on Roosevelt Road

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

North Avenue

North Avenue travels from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River and locally connects suburbs like Elmhurst and Carol Stream to St. Charles and the Fox River Valley. The roadway is designed as a major, arterial state highway intended to move a high volume of traffic at high speeds. The corridor cuts through the very northern portion of West Chicago, acting as a critical business district for the City, while also somewhat separating the residential areas to its north from the historic core of the community. North Avenue's intersection with Route 59 anchors a major retail node, which is east of the former Charlestowne Mall site and Pheasant Run Golf Course.

North Avenue has somewhat struggled as a business district within West Chicago and features vacancy and less-than-A-quality retail lease tenants. The recent losses of Hobby Lobby and Fox Valley Volkswagen add to existing vacancy. This commercial area is fragmented and generally developed piecemeal around a major signalized intersection; typical for its era, these properties must be redeveloped, repositioned, and reinvested to be competitive in the future.

These types of shopping centers face challenges in reinventing themselves and competing over time in virtually any community, but the intersection of North Avenue and Route 59 is further emphasized because, despite high traffic volumes, it does not anchor a major node of population density. To the east, the corridor is primarily industrial uses and designed around very low-density businesses.

The Mosaic Crossing Shopping Center is the clear catalyst opportunity. The site is very large, the existing buildings are set very far back from right-of-way, and the visibility into the development from the roadways is poor. Further, there are some site access and circulation issues. In general, this is a challenging development that features certain signs of obsolescence. This real estate represents one of the most critical opportunities for West Chicago's economic development efforts, particularly in terms of maximizing retail sales tax potential.



North Ave. & Illinois Route 59

Business & Industrial Park

Downtown & Illinois Route 59

Illinois Route 59

Roosevelt Road

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Action Items

- 1 Formalize a long-term economic strategy for this business district, in partnership with existing property and shopping center owners.
- 2 Consider the potential of conducting a detailed retail and restaurant market assessment that captures the maximum potential of this commercial area node; balance that market potential against concept scenarios that may introduce mixed-use, office, medical, hotel, and housing uses to the district.
- 3 Conduct a rapid-succession series of business retention meetings, involving shopping center managers and property owners, to determine the stability of the business district over the next two years.
- 4 Continue to engage the current property owners of the Mosaic Crossing Shopping Center to discuss the potential for a public-private partnership to redevelop this site, including adding density and mixed-use components as part of a long-term master plan. A redesign of this site could potentially include a mix of residential, office, medical, and hotel uses, alongside retail and restaurant businesses. By adding a mix of uses and greater density in the area it would increase daytime populations and generate more local demand. Such a project will likely require public incentives.
- 5 Examine the remaining vacant parcels for potential outlot development and/or beautification projects.



NORTH AVENUE & IL ROUTE 59

Districtwide Improvements

- 1 Formalize a Long-Term Economic Development Strategy
- 2 Conduct a Detailed Retail Market Assessment
- 3 Conduct Business Retention Meetings

Legend

▬ District Throughfares

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

The Benefits of Illinois 59 to West Chicago

Throughout the strategic planning process, outreach participants and community stakeholders have repeatedly cited the positive impact Illinois 59 has on West Chicago. It is true that IL-59 is a net benefit to the community. However, from an economic development standpoint it is important to understand its competitive advantage clearly. There are limited opportunities for additional development on IL-59; most of the highway frontage is residential or open space, and the existing commercial nodes are the best positioned real estate for retail, restaurant, and office development. In general, the commercial nodes on IL-59, located at Roosevelt Road, Main and Washington Streets, Tower Station, and at North Avenue, are stable and feature relatively low vacancy. The economic development strategy here should be on reinvestment and repositioning these nodes to continue to be competitive.

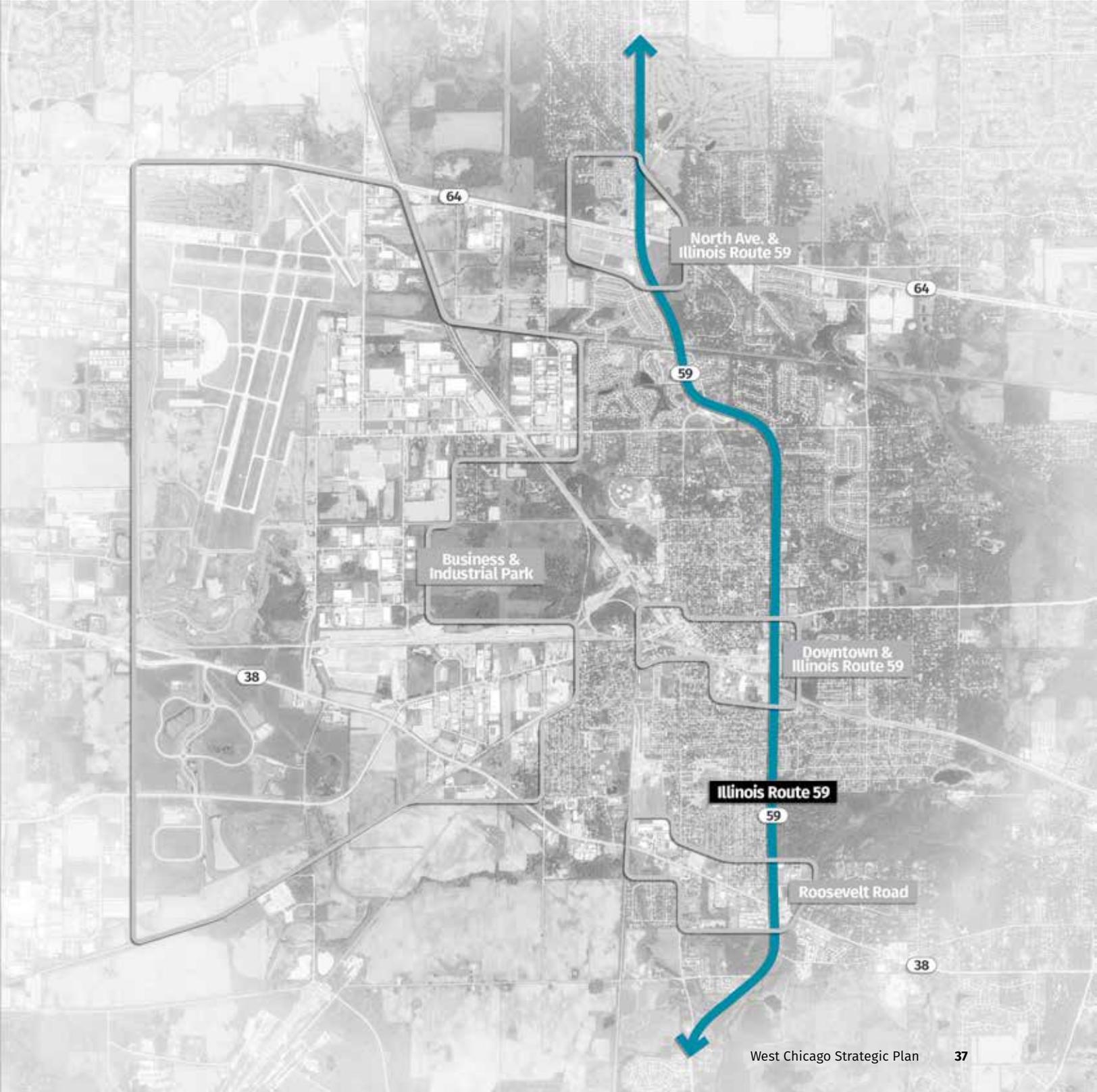
Beyond these four commercial nodes, the primary benefits of Illinois 59 are as a regional highway that efficiently moves motorists throughout the metro area. The highway corridor connects West Chicago to both I-90 and I-88, as well as to communities throughout DuPage County. Despite quick access to the heart of suburban Chicago, West Chicago still provides a quiet, small-town character surrounded by open space.

Illinois Route 59

Illinois Route 59 is similar to other commercial corridors in West Chicago in that its role as a major, regional Illinois state highway means it is designed to move high volumes of traffic great distances in the Chicago region. Route 59 serves western DuPage County, but it also largely functions to connect I-90 to I-88, generally Hoffman Estates to Naperville. There are dozens of municipalities and unincorporated areas along this stretch of highway, and none of them are differentiated from each other in any substantially memorable way. West Chicago does feature prominent and attractive gateway signs on 59, but otherwise the character of development has been consistent with the national chain and highway-oriented retail and fast food users seen in most other communities located on IL-59. Although close in relative proximity, Downtown West Chicago is just west of IL-59, and therefore many motorists traverse the community without ever knowing where they were.

Illinois Route 59 represents a tremendous economic development opportunity for West Chicago, primarily because the quality of existing development has been successful, but still leaves the capacity for potential improvement through redevelopment. There is a prominent retail district located at the intersection of IL-59 and North Avenue, which is addressed in the North Avenue section of this chapter. Further, Tower Station and Aldi serve as a neighborhood retail center in the middle of a primarily residential area. This shopping center features low vacancy and appears competitive, serving this established residential neighborhood.

The two critical nodes are the clusters of businesses oriented to Route 59 at Main Street and East Washington Street; ultimately these nodes are extensions of Downtown West Chicago and should be redeveloped as such. These areas should be denser, more mixed-use in nature, stitch into West Chicago's pedestrian and transit-oriented downtown district, and slow traffic on Route 59 enough to the extent the community character is apparent that a motorist is in the City – a distinctive and memorable place.



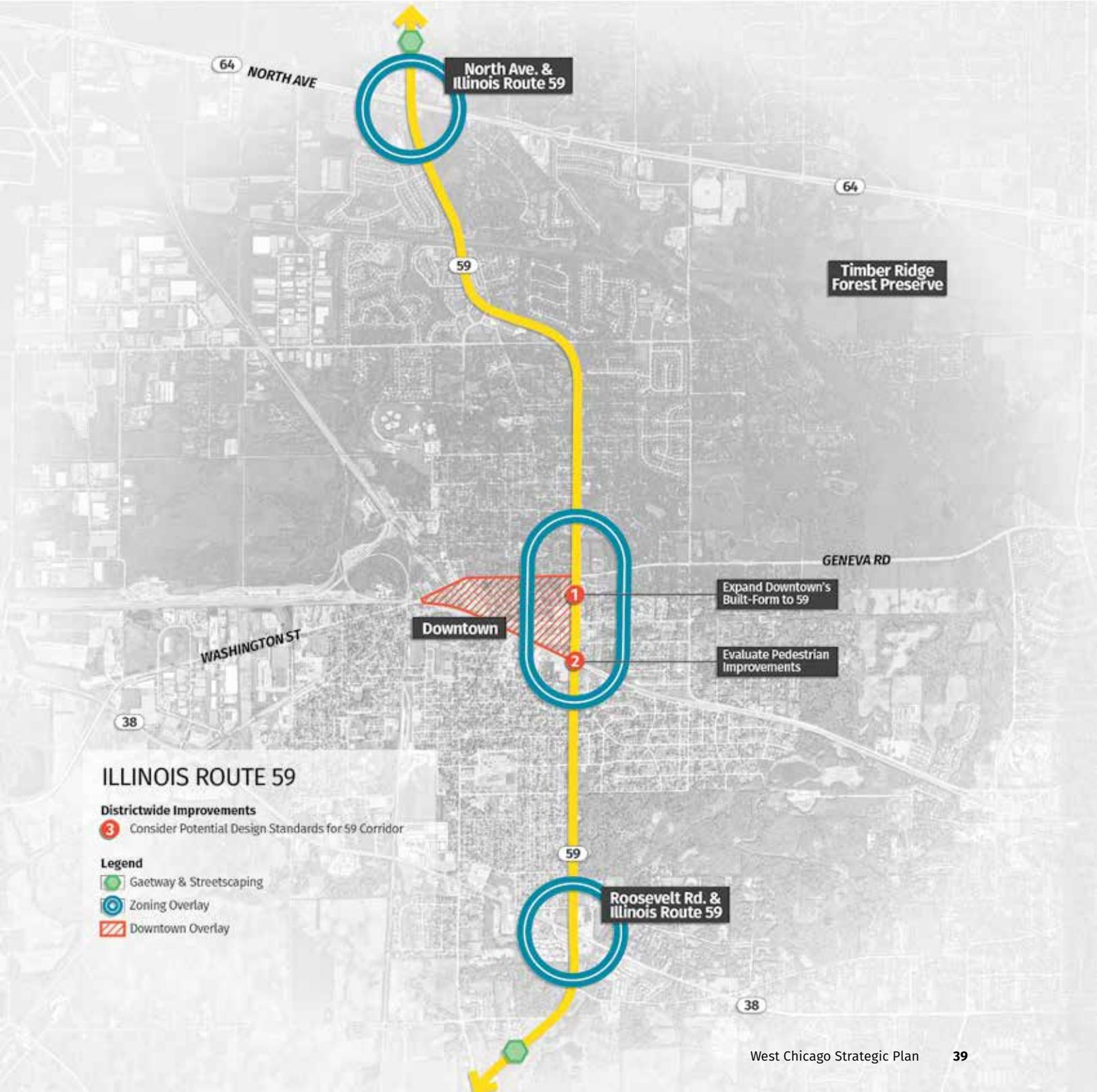
2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

The Benefits of Suburban Infill and Mixed-Use Development

Infill development promotes the better use of sites through reuse and repositioning of obsolete or underutilized buildings. Additionally, infill uses vacant land to contribute to community revitalization. This is often true in suburban communities, that originally developed at a lower density and in a manner that served the initial needs of residents. As suburban communities are changing and evolving today, the opportunity to redevelop and reposition real estate is timely. The benefits of mixed use infill development include environmental benefits of using land efficiently, confining growth into existing urbanized areas, and increasing walkability.

Action Items

- 1 Evaluate expanding Downtown West Chicago's larger neighborhood to extend to Route 59 and carry the district's multi-story, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented character to infill developments at those intersections.
- 2 Working with IDOT, evaluate opportunities to install pedestrian safety and traffic calming techniques at the West Washington and Main Street intersections over the long-term, and based on crash data and level of service.
- 3 Consider adopting urban design standards for the Route 59 corridor that are incorporated through overlay zoning districts to promote high-quality developments.



ILLINOIS ROUTE 59

Districtwide Improvements

- 3 Consider Potential Design Standards for 59 Corridor

Legend

- Gateway & Streetscaping
- Zoning Overlay
- Downtown Overlay

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Business & Industrial Parks

West Chicago is unique within the suburban Chicago region because it features a major airport as well as hundreds of acres of undeveloped office, industrial, and employment park real estate. Sometimes called “business parks” because of their flexibility, the former DuPage National Technology Park has transitioned into a more dynamic, mixed-use development that carries considerable opportunity for West Chicago. These “greenfield” sites are in close proximity to West Chicago’s existing industrial, manufacturing, and traditional employment centers, to the east.

One of the defining questions for West Chicago over the next generation is whether or not it can stimulate employment growth in these areas. Some businesses and employers that are in West Chicago today will leave. The long-term indicator for the City will be whether or not it replaces those businesses with new, growing employers. Although the location may lack certain advantages, such as immediate interstate access, it provides others like a local, qualified workforce. West Chicago needs to understand these industries, what factors matter to them when making an investment decision, and where the City fits in the regional Chicago marketplace.



Business & Industrial Park

North Ave. & Illinois Route 59

Downtown & Illinois Route 59

Illinois Route 59

Roosevelt Road

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

What is an incubator? an accelerator? co-work space?

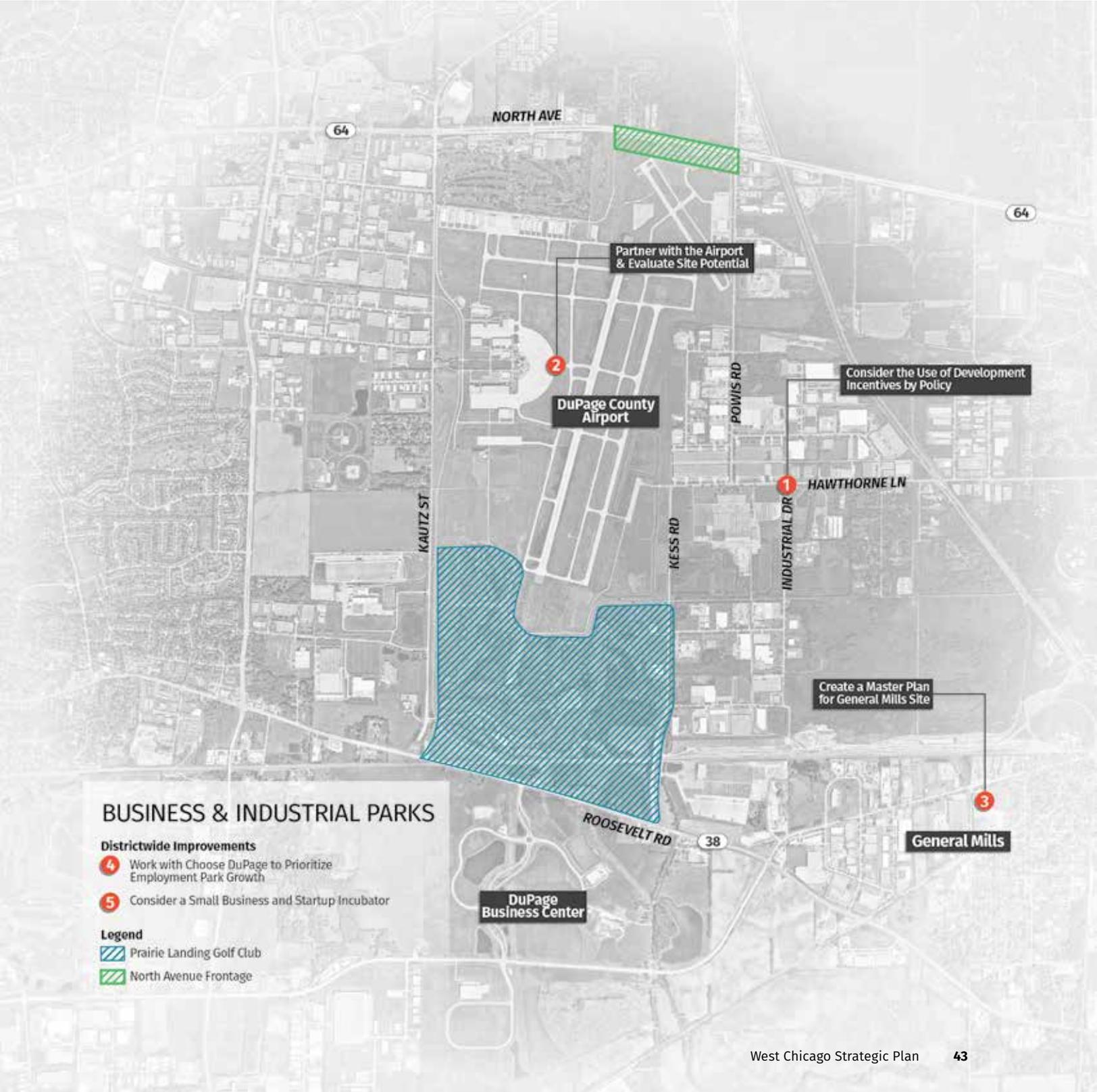
An incubator begins with companies that are in the early processes of starting a business. Some incubators have an application process while others work with companies and ideas they come in contact with. In most cases, startups accepted into an incubator program relate to a specific location to work with other companies in the incubator. Examples of regional incubators with networks already in the Chicago area are: Ideaslub, TechNexus, and Catapult Chicago.

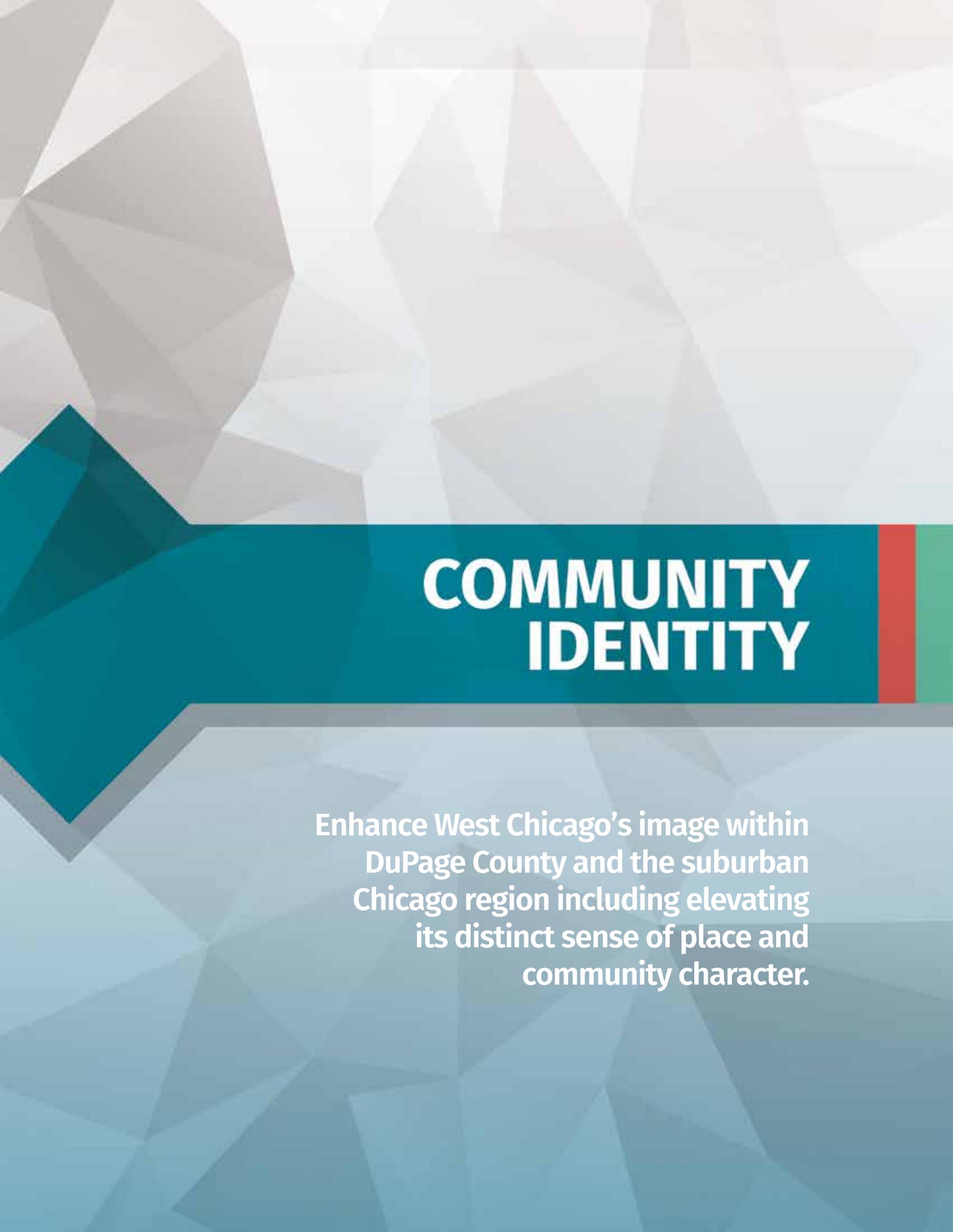
An accelerator program usually has a set timeframe for an individual company. Many times, these companies spend time working with a group of mentors to build out their business and avoid problems along the way. Accelerators always have an application process, and top programs are typically very selective. Examples of existing accelerator programs in the Chicago area are: Y Combinator, Techstars, and Brandyery.

Co-work spaces are typically more affordable and flexible working spaces for start-up businesses that might not have the capital to lock into an office lease. Typically, these spaces require a small monthly fee to cover the expenses of running an office, and include office furniture, open or flexible working spaces, high-speed internet access, break rooms, printers, etc. Some co-work spaces that are geared towards crafting have tools, scrap wood, laser-printers, welders, and circular saws, etc.

Action Items

- 1 Consider the use of development incentives and public financing tools to create a 5-year plan for roadway improvements and other needed infrastructure to stimulate new growth.
- 2 The City could host regular meetings with the DuPage Airport Authority and develop a formal investment strategy that identifies practices that leverage the benefits associated with the airport. As part of this endeavor, evaluate the North Avenue frontage for redevelopment.
- 3 The City should develop a long-range master plan to reposition the former General Mills site and proactively attract new investors and employers to the community. If necessary, this site could be segmented into smaller developable “pads” and marketed to smaller users.
- 4 The City could consider partnering with Choose DuPage, or other regional and local organizations, to elevate these industrial and office park development sites as a critical priority for the County’s economic development programs more broadly.
- 5 The City could consider developing small business incubator and accelerator space within these industrial areas; these facilities may be developed in partnership with colleges and universities located in the western suburbs, as well as in partnership with Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory. Such projects could be developed using a mixture of public, private, nonprofit, and university resources.





COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Enhance West Chicago's image within
DuPage County and the suburban
Chicago region including elevating
its distinct sense of place and
community character.

Community Identity

1

Establish a formal community marketing plan that promotes West Chicago's unique attributes and elevates the City's image within DuPage County and the Chicago region as a railroad "hometown" independent of recent suburbanization.

2

Create a Citizen Corps of community ambassadors who engage a "marketing network" of actors that represent West Chicago on a daily basis through a wide variety of activities.

3

Continue and elevate ongoing efforts to track, monitor, and assess how West Chicago is presented in the regional Chicago media, while establishing a proactive Public Information Officer function to centralize a "Success Story Center" in the City and pursue earned media and press coverage opportunities.

4

Create a 10-year placemaking and infrastructure investment strategy that emphasizes physical improvements that elevate the appearance and image of West Chicago.

Introduction

West Chicago is a fantastic example of why so many people prefer small “hometowns,” but unfortunately it often seems lost in the wide swath of suburbs that define western DuPage County.

Regardless of which state highway a motorist may be traveling on, they may not know when they pass through West Chicago. Other people hear “West Chicago” and think of somewhere near Oak Park or in “the City”.

For those that rely on regional media and have never been to West Chicago, they may only hear about the negative things. And others just keep repeating the same stories about what life was like in West Chicago over two decades ago. West Chicago has a great story but, for a variety of factors, it just is not getting out in front of people as effectively as it could and that needs to change.



1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Continue and elevate ongoing efforts to track, monitor, and assess how West Chicago is presented in the regional Chicago media, while establishing a proactive Public Information Officer function to centralize a “Success Story Center” in the City and pursue earned media and press coverage opportunities.

The Approach

How are branding and marketing different?

Branding is a promise to customers, and in the City of West Chicago’s case, visitors and citizens. A brand defines what the community stands for, and requires a community to identify their target audience and what they want so that the City can say why West Chicago is better than competing communities. The City of West Chicago has recently gone through a successful branding exercise that has resulted in a new logo and other public information material.

Marketing, on the other hand, is an integral part of your brand and helps to communicate the promise that the community wants visitors and citizens to know about. The marketing is what the City of West Chicago does to get their message or promise to existing and potential visitors and citizens.

West Chicago is a great hometown community, but unfortunately some people are stuck in the past. Whether the issue is thorium contamination, or crime and gang problems, or lagging schools, or challenges associated with becoming a more diverse community, some Chicago area residents’ perceptions of West Chicago are stuck in the 1990s. West Chicago has a compelling story to tell because it faced these challenges and largely solved them – that is a nationally unique narrative and one that reinforces the long-term commitment many residents have made to a community that has always been more of a small town than a suburb.

Over the next 10 years, the challenge for the West Chicago community is how to start to cut through the noise and effectively tell this story – as well as publicize its many other success stories. The approach needs to be proactive and it likely needs to be managed on a weekly, and even daily basis. The approach needs to engage local folks on the ground in West Chicago, as well as regional stakeholders and media outlets. Some of the approach needs to be more programmatic, such as pursuing earned media opportunities, and others need to be capital investments, such as elevating corridor streetscaping. But the ultimate outcome remains consistent – promote a positive narrative about West Chicago as a community, embracing its distinct character, and begin to slowly change outsiders’ minds while increasing community pride with local residents.

Action Items

1. Consider budgeting for and hiring a consultant to develop a long-term marketing campaign to more effectively position West Chicago in the region.
2. Target marketing efforts to comparable communities and strategic demographics instead of focusing on neighboring and adjacent western DuPage County cities.
3. Customize the message for residential relocations, economic development efforts, and visitor and tourism programming, while maintaining a high-level of message consistency.
4. Engage community stakeholders, residents, and the public in the community marketing process and ensure a consistent message and voice in implementation.
5. Assess strategies to market West Chicago as a major bicycling and outdoor recreation hub of the western suburbs, blending the appeal of a small town/Main Street community centered in a “greenbelt” of high-quality open space.

2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Create a Citizen Corps of community ambassadors who engage a “marketing network” of actors that represent West Chicago on a daily basis through a wide variety of activities.

The Approach

The best approach to tell a story about a place is still word-of-mouth. A community is a large, multi-dimensional, complex thing to tell a story about – and it takes a lot of different people. Many communities have been successful building teams of “hometown heroes” and ambassadors who help represent and promote their town to a wider audience.

Residents love West Chicago and they want more people to recognize how great it is. There is an organic local culture waiting to be tapped to leverage West Chicago’s pride as one of its greatest marketing and corridor branding strategies. That approach can be implemented through a series of key stakeholder networks and targeted programs. Some of these efforts can be managed through existing community groups, like the realtors, and other new programs, like resident-led tours, may need to be launched from a Citizen Corps organized by the City of West Chicago.

Action Items

1. Create a Citizen Corps of community ambassadors coordinated by the City of West Chicago who are willing to volunteer their time to meet with individuals interested in relocating to West Chicago, including staffing a variety of functions, ranging from answering basic questions about the City to conducting community tours.
2. Create a network of DuPage and Kane County realtors to leverage as a resource and mine locally-specific analysis about housing trends, demographic profiles, and the characteristics that shape the regional homeowner market. Partner with interested realtors to promote and market West Chicago in a way consistent with the community's existing branding initiatives.
3. Coordinate with local employers to provide new hires, particularly those relocating, with materials that promote "living locally" in West Chicago and the community's amenities and quality-of-life. Potentially evaluate more incentive-based employer-assisted housing programs that promote living locally in partnership with the City.
4. Coordinate with the local schools to develop materials that articulate the unique benefits of West Chicago schools that differentiate them from other DuPage County institutions and distribute these materials as a part of both the Citizen Corps and employer-promoted programs.
5. Leverage community volunteers passionate and knowledgeable about bicycling and outdoor recreation to lead activity groups based out of West Chicago's parks and forest preserves.

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Track, monitor, and assess how West Chicago is presented in the regional Chicago media, while establishing a proactive Public Information Officer function to centralize a “Success Story Center” in the City and pursue earned media and press coverage opportunities.

The Approach

West Chicago has a great story to tell – someone needs to dedicate the time and resources to persistently tell it. People remember something that is repeated at a certain frequency over a certain period of time. There’s a science to it and that exact messaging “sweet spot” varies depending on the complexity of the message and the audience to whom you are communicating it. Through the media – both traditional and social – the public is presented a certain narrative about West Chicago.

Although reactive, that narrative needs to be tracked and mapped. On the other hand, West Chicago needs to be relentlessly promoting its success stories and proudly holding up what residents take pride in for the whole Chicago region to take notice. These efforts need to occur at the individual level, the neighborhood level, and then more broadly through the regional media level. The collective impact of shaping West Chicago’s narrative will incrementally impact that word-of-mouth aspect over time.

Action Items

1. The City should evaluate adding resources to ensure an adequate amount of personnel time is available for a proactive Public Information Officer function that tracks, monitors, and reports on West Chicago's press coverage and trending social media activity.
2. The City should continue to use the "Success Story Center" that acts as a clearinghouse for all organizations, businesses, and stakeholders in the community to first collect positive news about West Chicago, and then secondly leverage relationships with various media outlets in the pursuit of earned media opportunities.
3. The City could potentially consider establishing a Neighborhood Council of Advisors consisting of neighborhood groups, homeowners' associations, and other similar organizations to regularly engage as a part of a communications strategy. Further, these groups could be engaged by a variety of City personnel at regular meetings.
4. The City could evaluate introducing participatory budgeting techniques to the community, particularly leveraged through resident leaders via the Neighborhood Council of Advisors.

What is a neighborhood council?

A neighborhood council is typically a volunteer-based organization of neighbors, business owners, educators, and non-profit leaders, supported by the City to make their neighborhood stronger. Neighborhood council board sizes vary from 7 to 30 individuals depending on the needs of the community, and they hold regular meetings (i.e. quarterly) and take on tasks such as creating events and programs that respond to community needs, or advocating on behalf of the community on issues such as crime, roads, and economic development, among other things. Further, individual neighborhood groups can come together and meet with other neighborhood leaders from around the City through a city-wide Council. These approaches typically ensure that residential needs and goals are voiced from throughout the community.

4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Create a 10-year placemaking and infrastructure investment strategy that emphasizes physical improvements that elevate the appearance and image of West Chicago.

The Approach

A community's image is often shaped through intangible aspects, like branding, marketing, advertising, word-of-mouth, and press coverage – but it is also shaped by physically visiting it and those memorable perceptions someone takes back with them. Infrastructure and a community's urban design (or built-environment) play a critical role in shaping opinions about a place. Planners call the opportunities to create neat, engaging, distinctive, and memorable locations in a community “placemaking” for that reason. The negative contrast is when a community is so unidentifiable you never knew you were there, or worse yet you took home a bad experience and discomfort.

West Chicago features a number of identifiable landmarks and memorable places, particularly Downtown and its historic core. The City has also made impactful investments in gateway monuments, streetscaping, and some neighborhood improvements. The City should pursue public-private partnerships as much as possible and lead a series of programs and efforts to accelerate the investment in signature placemaking projects that further distinguishes West Chicago as a readily identifiable and memorable small town community within the greater Chicago region.

Action Items

1. Conduct an assessment of the City's major corridors and produce a report that proposes streetscaping, infrastructure branding, wayfinding, and other placemaking improvements for further consideration, prioritization, and funding as part of capital improvements. This assessment should factor recent Illinois Department of Transportation design regulation changes and examine the potential for other signage, lighting, and traffic signal standards on state rights-of-way specifically.
2. Evaluate the community's sidewalk connectivity and street lighting coverage, and produce an assessment that prioritizes improvements to address public safety and community appearance.
3. Continue to support the creation of a public art program that contributes to both placemaking strategies throughout the City, as well as specifically within corridor branding efforts.
4. Evaluate coordinating economic development efforts with capital improvements to mark each commercial corridor in a distinctive manner.
5. Assess what facilities and infrastructure components are absent to elevate West Chicago as a hub for bicycling, trail use, and outdoor recreation within the western suburbs, and develop a capital improvement program to prioritize and fund their construction.
6. The City should lead a community-wide planning exercise to evaluate existing events, assess the potential to expand Railroad Days, and program new potential community events and festivals.
7. The City should engage Ball Horticultural Company to develop a community identity component around landscaping and botanical elements, including not only vegetation but also public art, events, and marketing.