

America in Bloom 2019 Evaluation Report



Community: West Chicago, Illinois
Population: 27,447
Population Category: 22,001-30,000
Evaluation Dates: July 22-23, 2019

Lead Judge: Teresa Woodard
Co-Judge: Sharon Hadden

America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage and planting pride through volunteerism.

Seven Criteria (Codes)	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
1. Community Vitality (CV)	84.00	67.00	79.76%
2. Flowers (FL)	92.00	69.00	75.00%
3. Landscaped Areas (LA)	76.00	54.00	71.05%
4. Urban Forestry (UF)	84.00	53.00	63.10%
5. Environmental Efforts (EE)	92.00	49.00	53.26%
6. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	88.00	76.00	86.36%
7. Overall Impression (OI)	80.00	55.00	68.75%
Other			
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation & Actions (ET)	13.00	11.00	84.62%
Scoring			
Total Points and Percentage	609.00	434.00	71.26%

Star ratings are based on overall percentage.

1 star = 0% - 9.99%	2 stars = 10% – 10.99%	3 stars = 20% – 29.99%	4 stars = 30% – 39.99%	5 stars = 40% – 49.99%
6 stars = 50% – 59.99%	7 stars = 60% – 69.99%	8 stars = 70% - 79.99%	9 stars = 80% – 89.99%	10 stars = 90% - 100%

Community representatives to receive the Evaluation Report (three minimum)		
Name	Title	Email
Rosemary Mackey	Marketing and Communications Coordinator	RMackey@westchicago.org
Ruben Pineda	Mayor	mpineda@westchicago.org
Mike Guttman	City Administrator	mguttman@westchicago.org

GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION:

Communities are required to provide the following prior to evaluation:

- Community Profile organized to follow the criteria and metrics. For repeat communities, call out what is new and/or implemented due to judges' recommendations.
- Evaluation Tour Itinerary with start and finish times for each day
- Community Map with community boundaries and the tour route
- Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour.

The areas to be scored:

Judges will review Community Profiles, Community Maps, and Evaluation Tour Itineraries to confirm the appropriateness of the areas to be evaluated and contact communities prior to the tour so adjustments can be made.

- All areas (municipal, commercial and residential) within the boundaries of the entrant's community/municipality (except as noted below) are scored and a representative portion of all areas must be included.
- Property to be scored, whether public or private, must be subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant's community/municipality.
- When a property does not meet these requirements, but the community's volunteers significantly impact the property with labor and/or funding, then judges may include in their scoring the property not subject to the codes and regulations of the entrant community.
- A community may request recommendations for areas toured but not scored.

Metrics are noted with unique codes based on the criteria. Ratings include:

N/A (Not Applicable): Communities should strive to implement all metrics; however, judges will use N/A when a metric is not scorable in a community. An N/A metric is not included in the point totals and does not affect percentages. Examples when N/A may apply in a metric: commercial/business areas do not exist; state or county statutes prevent implementation of a metric.

Not Started (0 pts.): programs or procedures are not in place.

Launched (1 pt.): programs or procedures are in place but not fully realized.

Achieved (2 pts.): programs or procedures are implemented but could be improved.

Surpassing (3 pts.): programs or procedures are well-implemented.

Excelling (4 pts.): programs or procedures are exceptional.

NS (Not Scored): preset in the Judges' Discretion metric's point box for when a score there is not appropriate.

Judges' Discretion (N/A, 3-4 pts.): judges may add and score an item not in the metrics. This item must be an unusual or newly implemented project, program, or initiative that can be repeated in other communities and perhaps used as a future metric.

Other:

- This Evaluation Report's scoring, general observations, and general and criteria recommendations are based upon the community's efforts including its levels of participation in, or implementation of the metrics in each of the criteria.
- Future projects and programs are not scored.
- The scoring for the seven evaluation criteria is adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the community's location. Make sure the judges are made aware of any challenges that were faced during the year.

What's New this Year in the even more vibrant Evaluation Report. Thank you for your feedback.

- The Community Vitality criterion leads off the Evaluation Report.
- Metrics were added, deleted, or edited in all criteria. Some metrics stayed the same.
- Some metric ratings columns have new headings that better describe the scoring.
- Metric codes are more specific so future changes in them will be minimized.
- NS - Not Scored is only used in the Judges' Discretion metrics

General Observations:

Congratulations to West Chicago for taking more great strides in its third year in the America in Bloom program! We are grateful to have you in the program and know your efforts are inspiring other communities in many ways. West Chicago's reputation of collaboration, passion for plants, love of history and especially its railroads, vibrant arts and heart for community were evident throughout the community. In today's world of cultural strife, we were especially moved how West Chicago fosters diversity and inclusivity to create such a welcoming community for all.

The community has much to celebrate with new tenants at the 800-acre DuPage Business Center and the expansion of Ball Horticultural's headquarters, plus other successes like the retention of the City's 1,500 ash trees, the planting of 200 more parkway trees, a new food pantry, the launch of the Butterfly Effect public art project, updates to Sesquicentennial Park, the remarkable turnout for Big Boy steam locomotive, and the strong attendance at the Railroad Days and Mexican Independence Day festivals.

Creative tax incentives and a master plan for downtown redevelopment are further fueling economic development. We know many more wonderful things await just down the track.

Thank you for your participation. And, we invite you to participate again next year, so America in Bloom can return and see the ongoing progress in West Chicago and the difference your community is making.



Community Vitality (CV) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
COMMUNITY VITALITY (CV): policies, programs, activities, and facilities that lead to a vibrant community and a sense of well-being. Includes libraries, community centers, arts/cultural museums; and parks, playgrounds, dog parks, sports fields, water activities, trails, and other outdoor recreational opportunities	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
a. Leadership and Policy						
CV.a.01 - Municipal volunteer boards are in place					X	
CV.a.02 - Municipality offers grants to neighborhood associations for enhancements		X				
CV.a.03 - Master plan in place for public green space and parks						X
CV.a.04 - ADA accessibility in public outdoor areas including play equipment					X	
CV.a.05 - Promotion of alternative transportation: pedestrian, bicycling, car/van pools, ride sharing, and/or mass transit					X	
b. Facilities and Events						
CV.b.01 - Outdoor recreation facilities meet community needs: parks, playgrounds, splash pads, dog parks, sports fields, sports courts, swimming pools, golf courses, kayak/canoe trails, public access to water bodies, etc.						X
CV.b.02 - Walking, biking, and exercise trail network in place					X	
CV.b.03 - Performances/events for art, dance, theatre, music, and/or cinema						X
CV.b.04 - Run/walk/bike/kayak/canoe events are held					X	
CV.b.05 - Benches and seating available near walking, exercise, and playground areas					X	
CV.b.06 - Structures, shade sails, or trees provide shade for spectators and/or participants					X	
CV.b.07 - Playgrounds exist and age-appropriate ranges of equipment are offered						X
CV.b.08 - Public library/resources center is available					X	
CV.b.09 - Community center is available						X
CV.b.10 - Farmers' Market(s) is available					X	
c. Community Involvement						
CV.c.01 - Community gardening sites are in use					X	
CV.c.02 - Level of participation in food banks, hunger-relief, Plant a Row for the Hungry (GardenComm initiative), etc.						X
CV.c.03 - Participation in civic events such as Bike to Work Days, Walk to School Days, etc.					X	
CV.c.04 - Voluntary (non-mandated HOA) neighborhood organizations in place					X	
CV.c.05 - Recognition programs for volunteers					X	

d. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
CV.d.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Healthy West Chicago and Educare school						
Totals:		Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage		
1. Community Vitality (CV)		84	67	79.76%		

Community Vitality (CV) Recommendations:



The judges’ first stop – the Food Pantry -- provided great insight to the heart of West Chicago. Here, two churches, a private foundation and a county agency have come together in a remarkable way to purchase and restore a former grocery store which will greatly multiply the space from 900 square feet at the previous location to 5,600 square feet. The new pantry will feature historic photos of the old grocery, coolers for fresh foods and solar panels. This cooperative spirit, sense of dignity and

inclusive culture set a wonderful tone as we learned more about your caring community.

A block away at Gallery 200, the Garden Works project further supports hunger relief efforts by providing 30 West Chicago families with 4’x 8’ raised beds, soil, compost, seedlings, seeds, gardening tools and training to grow their own food. St. Michael’s Church also provides a community garden with multiple raised beds.



We encourage West Chicago to move forward with its plans to create a Farmers Market of railcars. It’s a truly unique idea and would draw visitors from surrounding communities. In addition, it would help promote the community’s vibrant food scene.

Habitat for Humanity has built 24 homes in West Chicago. Two homeowners have paid off their mortgages, one family is sending two kids to college on scholarship, and others are actively working and growing in their jobs.

Mayor Ruben Pineda is committed to the Healthy West Chicago effort and hosts monthly walks through various parts of the community. Healthy West Chicago hosts fitness events, nutrition talks and cooking demonstrations. At the high school, students took a “no sugar” pledge and replaced vending machines with healthy options. The community further promotes active lifestyles with its wealth of quality recreational facilities including the Turtle Splash Water Park, the ARC Center (Athletics, Recreation and Community), a championship links golf course and the 61-mile Illinois Prairie Path. Reed Kepler Park hosts movies and concerts throughout the summer.

Explore the possibility of a bike share program offered at the ARC to encourage further use of the bike trails by all residents.

Pet activities are another way to keep residents active. Consider hosting a Wagfest at your dog park or outfitting it with a mini splash pad (pictured here) mimicking the big one at the water park.

The arts community thrives in West Chicago. Gallery 200, once a vacant hardware store, is now home to a gallery, education space and a dance studio. One night, the garden club may be working on a project while a youth ballet group rehearses. Another night, one of the international artists in residence may be painting murals with a group of community kids. For festivals, the numerous large-scale art projects are pulled into the street to bring the events to life.



Other examples of West Chicago's community vitality include its commitment to early childhood education with the EduCare's state-of-the-art school with instruction in dual languages and its quality workplaces. Ball Horticulture, named a "Great Place to Work," is renovating its current facilities and building a research addition.

Lastly, some say the quality of communities can be judged by the quality of their coffee shops. In West Chicago's case, Kindred Coffee makes it a winning community with its award-winning latte art, community art shows and musical performances.

Flowers Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
2. FLOWERS (FL): flowering annuals, perennials, bulbs, tropical plants, flowering topiaries, and colorful foliage and/or cut plant material for season-round interest for displays in containers, hanging baskets, window boxes, raised planters, trellises, and in-ground beds	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
a. Leadership and Policy						
FL.a.01 - Public or private management of flower displays					X	
b. Plan of Action						
FL.b.01 - Action plan developed each season for procurement, scheduling, planting, and maintenance of flower displays					X	
FL.b.02 - Recognition program in place for attractively planted containers					X	
FL.b.03 - Demonstration/display garden(s) with labelled flowers in place and promoted					X	
FL.b.04 - Effective communication about selection and care of flowers for beautification					X	
c. Design						
FL.c.01 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest and dramatic effect while appearing coordinated					X	
FL.c.02 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for current and expected environmental conditions					X	
FL.c.03 - Distribution and Location: displays found throughout the community					X	
FL.c.04 - Location: displays are located to serve as focal points					X	
FL.c.05 - Seasonal Displays: seasonal displays with spring, summer, fall, and/or holiday displays				X		
FL.c.06 - Scale: if hanging baskets are in use, their size is in scale to their surroundings					X	
FL.c.07 - Scale: if containers are in use, their size is in scale to their surroundings					X	
F.L.c.08 – Plant height: flower displays are designed with mature plant heights in mind					X	
FL.c.09 - Color: pleasing color combinations (monochromatic, analogous, and/or complementary) are used					X	
FL.c.10 - Form: spiky, rounded, and/or cascading flower forms are used in pleasing combinations					X	
d. Maintenance						
FL.d.01 - Watering procedures to maintain growth in place					X	
FL.d.02 - Fertilization: appropriate fertilization procedures using slow-release, liquid fertilizers, and/or soil amendments					X	
FL.d.03 - Grooming: regular pruning, dead-heading, removal and replacement of dead plants					X	
FL.d.04 - Plant health strategies in place to monitor and manage pests and diseases (IPM-Integrated Pest Management)					X	
FL.d.05 - Health and Vigor: plants are robust and floriferous				X		

e. Community Involvement						
FL.e.01 - Volunteers provide donations and/or funds and/or participate in the design, planting, and/or care of flower displays					X	
FL.e.02 - Civic groups, garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school programs, etc., sponsor plant sales, plant swaps, provide information, or educational sessions that contribute to the quality and implementation of the community's flower displays						X
f. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
FL.f.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Ball Hort display gardens and Kruse Museum and gardens						
Totals:		Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage		
2. Flowers (FL)		92	69	75.00%		

Flowers (FL) Recommendations:



Ball Horticultural Company's influence is seen throughout the community whether it is downtown's doubled hanging baskets of calibrachoa or one resident's infamous front yard of wave petunias. The company's 400 employees bring flowers home to trial in their private gardens; they volunteer in downtown plantings and share their expertise with neighbors. In addition, Ball graciously opens its doors annually for residents to tour the company's impressive display gardens. *Consider identifying Ball plants used throughout the community to reinforce the company's positive influence. For example, a downtown display garden could have a small sign that reads "West Chicago is the proud home of Ball Horticulture and this new Archangel Coral angelonia."*

Under the direction of president Barbara Bizzarri, the West Chicago Garden Club is thriving with a record membership of over 100. The organization is active in the community, offers workshops, teaches in the schools, hosts events, plants trees in the park, volunteers at Kruse House Museum's gardens, organizes garden tours, creates butterfly art and actively recruits new members. As the garden club strives to diversify its membership, consider bringing a speaker such as veggies advocate [Kristian Carrillo-Bucaram](#) of Houston, TX or houseplants influencer Ivan Martinez of [Tula Plants](#).

This summer, West Chicago was blessed with an abundance of begonias. We Grow Dreams greenhouse and garden center donated 200 flats of begonias to businesses and have contributed to a cohesive element to the floral displays throughout the city. We also noticed the donation engaged new planting areas that perhaps will be repeated in future years. *Recruit the Chamber of Commerce or a local business to sponsor this "Begonia Blitz" for years to come.*



West Chicago's Blooming Fest, held annually in May, is an excellent way to celebrate the community's horticulture heritage and foster the next generation of flower fans. Many small businesses are catching the spirit with container displays. And the high school's Horticulture Club sells annuals and perennials they raise from plugs donated by Ball.

Pollinator planting is impressive with a number of pollinator gardens at City Hall, private residences, street parkways and city parks. The gardens illustrate the community's support of the Mayor's pledge to the Monarch and reinforce the city's public art project of 36 butterflies.

We encourage the city to bring more color into its pollinator gardens and natural-style plantings with large drifts of the city's official coneflowers. For inspiration, look to Ball's entry garden of 'Cheyenne Spirit' coneflowers (right). Also try planting large swaths of other colorful perennials from Ball's Darwin Perennials division such as Amsonia 'Blue Ice', Eupatorium 'Little Joe' or 'Ruby', Salvia Bumble series, and Agastache 'Blue Fortune' or 'Purple Haze' for maximum curb and pollinator appeal.



The downtown containers are masterpieces, and the trough containers (see below left) at Sesquicentennial Park are a great addition. *Consider planting them with a variety of showy, yet drought-tolerant succulents (see below right).*



Landscaped Areas Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
3. LANDSCAPED AREAS (LA): plants and related programs for the leadership, design, installation, and maintenance of landscape. Includes shrubs, ornamental grasses, vines, evergreen topiaries, turf, and groundcovers						
a. Leadership and Policy						
LA.a.01 - Management of planting public landscaped areas					X	
LA.a.02 - Municipal landscape ordinance requires landscaping and maintenance for new and/or improved commercial development					X	
b. Plan of Action						
LA.b.01 - Planning for restoration of natural areas					X	
LA.b.02 - Strategy for management of invasive plants				X		
LA.b.03 - Demonstration/display gardens with interpretive signage (pollinator, wildlife, native, low-water use, etc.) in place and promoted					X	
LA.b.04 - Effective communication of “Right Plant in the Right Place” and/or invasive plant issues					X	
LA.b.05 - Recognition program for attractive landscapes in place				X		
c. Design						
LA.c.01 - Unity and Variety: plant combinations create visual interest while appearing coordinated					X	
LA.c.02 - Suitability of Plant Selections: plants selected for existing and anticipated environmental conditions					X	
LA.c.03 - Distribution/Locations: landscaping found throughout the community and at key locations					X	
d. Maintenance						
LA.d.01 - Grooming: pruning of plants, removal and/or replacement of dead plants				X		
LA.d.02 - Plant Health: strategies such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests				X		
LA.d.03 – Organic mulch from renewable and sustainable sources is used by the municipality in appropriate places						X
LA.d.04 - Weed Management: strategies in place to manage weeds (removal, mulching, etc.)					X	
LA.d.05 - Health and Vigor: plants are robust				X		
LA.d.06 - Turf Care: proper mowing, edging, and replacement of dead turf					X	
LA.d.07 - Turf Health: procedures such as IPM (Integrated Pest Management) in place to monitor and manage diseases, pests, and weeds					X	

e. Community Involvement						
LA.e.01 - Volunteers assist in funding, design, installation, and/or care of landscaped areas and/or turf in public areas					X	
f. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
LA.f.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Landscape gems of Ball Hort and golf course						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
3. Landscaped Areas (LA)	76	54	71.05%			

Landscaped Areas (LA) Recommendations:

DuPage County airport entrance offers a wonderful first impression for businesses arriving to the community. While the community's smart tax incentives are drawing many new businesses to this commercial district, the quality landscaping further enhances the district's overall appeal. The summer alliums put on quite a show.



Landscape at the nearby links golf course is equally "on par" with its knowledgeable horticulture staff and natural-style plantings ala the Chicago area's influential landscape designer Roy Diblik. The judges appreciate the special care and attention to chemical-free weed control, especially around the course's water bodies. The landscape style is fitting for the links style golf course and complements the city's commitment to pollinators.

Residents Dan and David Wilcox are to be commended for their efforts to introduce neighbors and their township to the value of historical native plants. They not only created diverse prairie habitat in their own backyard, they plant their neighborhood's roadsides with native plants, negotiated with the township to allow the plantings and encouraged neighbors to follow their example.

Kudos to the parks department for the beautiful landscapes and hand-watered floral displays at Reed Kepler park and to the Friends of West Chicago Parks Foundation for adopting the 2018 judges' recommendation to ID plants in the park. We also appreciate the plant labels at the Kruse Museum gardens. These labels serve an important role in exposing residents and visitors to a variety of plants and hopefully inspire them to plant some in their own backyard. We also commend you for the new plantings at Sesquicentennial Park. *Consider a "West Chicago in Blooms At Work" sign like the example on the right to point out newly planted landscapes.*





At Turtle Splash, we applaud the parks department for its highly visible, engaging water feature at the entrance. Here, youth can experience first-hand a wildlife habitat complete with frogs, fish and dragonflies. *Consider further engaging poolside youth with a sensory garden of plants to touch, smell, taste and hear with kid-friendly labels like those used for pool rules. See sample sign from AIB community Holliston to the left. Another option would be a butterfly/dragonfly habitat involving the high school horticulture club in its design and planting.*



The pollinator planting around city hall is off to a great start! *We encourage you to fully fill the bed for maximum visual effect and weed control. Consider colorful perennials such as Agastache ‘Blue Fortune,’ Monarda, Coneflowers, Goldenrod ‘Fireworks,’ Asters and Allium ‘Summer Beauty.’ Also, try cutting back the salvia after blooms for a second flush of color.*



As a railway community, West Chicago might consider some additional landscape beds near key railroad crossings to appeal to commuters waiting on train traffic and reinforce your railway branding.

Ball Hort’s display gardens are a shining star in the community as they attract customers from around the world. They offer plenty of inspiration whether it’s the natural plantings in the front or the massive annual and perennial display gardens in the back.



West Chicago also embraces its natural areas as we saw with the 300-acre prairie cared for by the West Chicago Stewardship Group and Volunteer Stewardship Network of Illinois. Here, they’ve done an excellent job removing bush honeysuckle and other invasives. *To help recruit the next generation of stewards, consider hosting a [Bioblitz](#), a community event where participants (possibly college biology students) identify as many species as possible in a morning or afternoon. Also consider trail runs, a summer solstice walk with a naturalist, scout group events, done-in-a-day high school service projects, lepidoptera/odonata workshops, Earth Day challenge events, Audubon bird counts and Monarch Watch counts to attract new faces to the preserve.*

Conservationist Baba Dioum’s words speak to the value of education in conservation: “In the end, we will conserve only what we love; we will only love what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught.”

Urban Forestry Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
4. URBAN FORESTRY (UF): trees and related programs for the leadership, management, design, installation, and maintenance on public and private lands	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
a. Leadership and Policy						
UF.a.01 - Qualified personnel are on staff or accessing trained individuals such as arborists and/or urban foresters					X	
UF.a.02 - Tree board/commission and/or department is active					X	
UF.a.03 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for tree preservation on public and/or private property				X		
UF.a.04 - Municipal ordinance(s) enacted/enforced for protection of trees during construction				X		
UF.a.05 - Currently a Tree City USA community and/or has the Growth Award designation		X				
b. Plan of Action						
UF.b.01 - Tree inventory for public areas is complete and current within the past ten years					X	
UF.b.02 - Annual tree planting program for public areas				X		
UF.b.03 - Management strategies for removal of dead, imperiled, and invasive trees					X	
UF.b.04 - Policy for recognition and protection of heritage trees in place		X				
UF.b.05 - Effective communication to residents of recommended trees, proper planting, "Right Tree in the Right Place," and/or maintenance					X	
c. Design						
UF.c.01 - Variety: current practices include appropriate selection of tree species being planted					X	
UF.c.02 - Placement: current practices include appropriate spacing and planting area for optimal root and canopy growth					X	
UF.c.03 - Planting: current practices include correct tree planting depth (trunk flare at/above grade)					X	
UF.c.04 - Arboretum in place with labels and descriptive signage					X	
d. Maintenance						
UF.d.01 - Tree Health: strategies in place to monitor and manage diseases and pests					X	
UF.d.02 - Watering, Mulching, and Pruning for New Trees: procedures for watering and proper mulching (i.e., no volcano mulching) in place					X	
UF.d.03 - Pruning for Established Trees: appropriate pruning, removal of dead limbs, and canopies raised adequately above vehicle and pedestrian areas					X	

e. Community Involvement						
UF.e.01 - Policy for donations to tree planting in public areas (memorial trees, etc.) in place					X	
UF.e.02 - Community participates in Arbor Day activities				X		
UF.e.03 - Volunteers assist in tree planting and/or care				X		
f. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
UF.f.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Addition of 200 trees through CN Grant						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
4. Urban Forestry (UF)	84	53	68.10%			

Urban Forestry (UF) Recommendations:



The public works department is truly dedicated to West Chicago's tree canopy as shown in its tree care, especially the treatment of its 1,500 ash trees for Emerald Ash Borer. The \$75,000 annual investment is paying off with a 70 percent success rate, saving thousands in tree removal and replacement, and retaining the aesthetic and stormwater value these trees bring to the community.

The challenge of the ash borer has also positively moved the community to complete a city-wide inventory of its 10,000 trees and diversify its tree canopy by no more than 12 percent of one species. The inventory also guides future tree care planning and planting priorities such as the recent 200 trees funded by a CN grant and matching dollars from the city.

The parks department shows a similar quality commitment to the park's 1,000 trees inventoried in 2018. Reed Keppler Park serves as a level one arboretum. The judges appreciated the park's use of chipped tree cuttings for mulch, the tree snag with carved wood spirit (a [valuable wildlife habitat](#)) and recent planting of shade trees around the pyramid climbing tower. *Invite an arborist to lead a tree walk at Reed Keppler Park in the fall to point out trees and their various landscape uses. Encourage residents to come with questions.*

Consider starting a heritage tree program to honor West Chicago's historic trees, like the 200-year-old tree on Washington and the century-old oaks at Reed Keppler. Take nominations from residents and their properties as well. Host a recognition ceremony each year. Tie a celebratory ribbon around the tree and invite local media and dignitaries. Have youth measure the tree circumference with tape measurer and its height using the [shadow method](#). Engage a historian in telling the story of each tree.

Expand your wonderful community gardens by planting fruiting trees or giveaway fruiting trees with Garden Works plots.

Environmental Efforts Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
5. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS (EE): environmental leadership, policies, plans and programs for resource conservation; pollution control; trash, recycling, and reuse; and alternative fuel vehicles	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
a. Leadership and Policy						
EE.a.01 - Environmental Advisory Board(s) and/or Green Team(s) in place				X		
EE.a.02 - Electric/alternative fuel vehicle(s) used by municipality		X				
EE.a.03 - Electric vehicle charging station(s) provided		X				
EE.a.04 - Stormwater management policies in place				X		
EE.a.05 - Pet waste policies in place and enforced				X		
b. Plan of Action						
EE.b.01 - Sustainability Action Plan in place				X		
EE.b.02 - Effective education about environmental efforts				X		
EE.b.03 - Litter and/or environmental clean-up procedures in use				X		
c. Resource Conservation						
EE.c.01 - Bio-swales and/or rain gardens to reduce stormwater run-off pollution in place					X	
EE.c.02 - Home energy audit/incentives available				X		
EE.c.03 - Low-flow water device incentives available				X		
d. Trash, Recycling, and Reuse Management						
EE.d.01 - Residential curbside trash collection is available and/or required				X		
EE.d.02 - Residential curbside recycling collection and/or collection points are in place				X		
EE.d.03 - Standardized labels (Recycle Across America) are on trash/recycling bins/carts				X		
EE.d.04 - Standardized labels (Recycle Across America) are on trash/recycling receptacles in public areas				X		
EE.d.05 - Yard waste composting pick-up and/ or drop-off available				X		
EE.d.06 - Prescription drug drop-off(s) available				X		
EE.d.07 - Hazardous waste and/or electronics waste collection or drop-off(s) available				X		
EE.d.08 - Plastic bag and/or foam container collection point(s) available					X	
EE.d.09 - Reuse opportunities are available (clothing, books, household goods, repair initiatives, etc.					X	

e. Community Involvement						
EE.e.01 - Participation in Earth Day celebrations, and similar events that enhance public awareness of environmental issues				X		
EE.e.02 - Garden clubs, Master Gardeners, school curricula, and/or Soil and Water Conservation District, etc. provide educational opportunities for rain barrel usage, backyard habitats, and other environmental initiatives						X
f. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
EE.f.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Backyard meadow and streetscape with natives -- David and Daniel Wilcox						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
5. Environmental Efforts (EE)	92	49	53.26%			

Environmental Efforts (EE) Recommendations

This year, West Chicago has done a wonderful job promoting environmental stewardship through the Mayor's pledge to Monarchs, the City's art installation of 36 butterflies, the numerous pollinator gardens and the showing of "The Guardians" movie. The pollinator campaign provides a rallying point for environmental conservation and opportunities for broader discussions about stewardship of the community's natural resources.

Kudos to the community for its recycling commitment, to the schools for installing fountain features for refillable water bottles, to the West Chicago Environmental Commission and the Green Disciples its pumpkin collection/composting effort, to Reed Keppler Park for its solar-powered lights, to the ARC for its solar field powering 80 percent of the facility, to the First United Methodist Church for its Styrofoam and shoe collection, and to the community for its wetlands features in community and industrial parks.

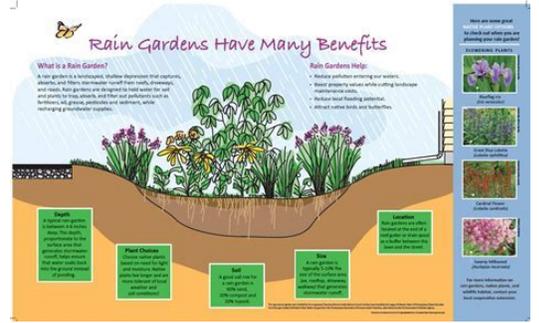


The judges were wowed by beekeeper Sara Bass, her advocacy efforts and knowledge of these important pollinators. We especially appreciate her commitment to bee stewardship versus honey production and her willingness to share with others through talks at the library. She joins other beekeepers like queen bee producer Bill Whitney, David Sabathne who shares his honey with the food pantry and Sam Chripczuk who brings his enclosed colony to display at Blooming Fest. *We encourage the community to further tap Sara's expertise and storytelling talents by scheduling her for preschool and school programs.*

Judi Horsley is a champion for Monarch conservation as she teaches school groups and garden groups about Monarch's habitat needs, their fascinating life cycle and amazing migration patterns. She and her husband have learned much through observation and Judy's participation in a three-day workshop at the North American Monarch Institute. She generously shares her knowledge as she invites groups into her backyard filled with Monarch host plants and nectar sources. *We encourage West Chicago to host a Monarch/pollinator workshop for the DuPage area with training in Monarch habitat and citizen science projects. For inspiration, see the [Cleveland Pollinator Symposium](#) with speakers from Monarch Watch and other groups. We commend Judy's efforts in Monarch raising small quantities for educational purposes but dissuade raising large quantities. The practice can [spread disease and negatively impact genetics.](#)*

St. Michaels' community garden is cleverly collecting rainwater from the shelter roof above a series of rain barrels. Well done! *Consider supplementing your landscape educational efforts by adding a rain barrel at the ARC and a demonstration rain garden along a visible side of its parking lot. See photo for sample signage.*

Please note this criteria's score for 2019 is up one point while the total possible points also increased, because we didn't score the Electric vehicle and charging stations as "NA." For 2019, judges are encouraged to avoid using the "NA" and rather make it a challenge for the communities to try to achieve these items for the future.



Celebrating Heritage Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
6. CELEBRATING HERITAGE (CH): recognition, designation, protection, commemoration, and celebration of historical, cultural, natural, agricultural, and industrial resources	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
a. Leadership and Policy						
CH.a.01 - Historic preservation ordinance effectively provides commercial and residential <u>district</u> designation and protection from demolition						X
CH.a.02 - Historic preservation ordinance effectively provides commercial and residential <u>individual structure</u> designation and protection from demolition					X	
CH.a.03 - Design guidelines in place to preserve the character of historic neighborhoods and/or structures					X	
CH.a.04 - Protective covenants to protect structures from demolition are in place and promoted					X	
CH.a.05 - Incentives offered to promote preservation: tax credits, waived permit fees, eased setbacks, rebates, etc.					X	
CH.a.06 - Land trusts and/or conservation easements to protect open spaces are available						X
CH.a.07 - Historic Preservation and/or Architectural Review Board in place and effective					X	
CH.a.08 - Historical Society is active						X
b. Plan of Action						
CH.b.01 - Effective communication of ordinances, policies, and restoration methods				X		
CH.b.02 - National Register of Historic Places district and/or individual designations in place					X	
CH.b.03 - Natural and/or agricultural areas are protected					X	
CH.b.04 - Archives, artifacts, cemetery records, and/or oral histories in place and properly stored						X
CH.b.05 - Education: historical publications/websites, interpretive signage, and programs in place						X
c. Commemoration						
CH.c.01 - Signage in place for historic neighborhoods and/or structures				X		
CH.c.02 - Historical museum(s) and/or interpretive displays maintained						X
CH.c.03 - Cemeteries, monuments, and/or plaques in place and well-maintained					X	
CH.c.04 - Community heritage promoted through tours (guided or self), brochures, Smartphone apps, etc.						X
CH.c.05 - Parades, festivals, events, programs commemorating a community's heritage are held						X
CH.c.06 - National Preservation Month in May celebrated						X

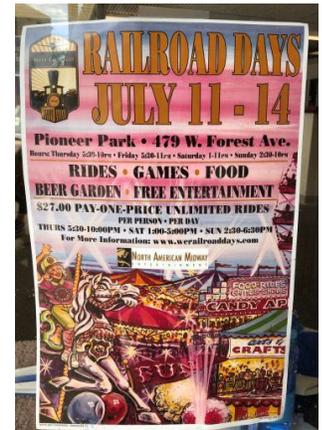
d. Community Involvement						
CH.d.01 - Volunteers participate in planning and implementing recognition of a community's heritage through historical tours, parades, festivals, etc.						X
CH.d.02 - Volunteers participate in maintaining historical sites and structures						X
f. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
CH.e.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
History champion: Sara Phalen						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
6. Celebrating Heritage (CH)	88	76	86.36%			

Celebrating Heritage (CH) Recommendations:



West Chicago excels in celebrating heritage with its dedicated Historical Preservation Commission, engaging City Museum, cultural- and history-focused public arts projects, and heritage-rich festivals. In 2018, AIB recognized West Chicago's events prowess with its "Life of the Party" award. At the Mexican Independence Day, the Mayor kicks off the event by opening a large pinata suspended 30 feet in the air. At festivals, residents participate in large-scale community art projects like the train mosaic of colorful cups. Events like this attract 3,000 visitors and generate revenue for local businesses.

The City keeps its train history alive through the annual Railroad Days Festival, museum displays of the boxcar camps, and interpretive signage along the Prairie Path. West Chicago was chosen as the only Illinois stop for the Union Pacific Great Race Across the Midwest with the Big Boy steam engine. The Big Boy attracted 45,000 to West Chicago, its City Museum and local restaurants. *We encourage the City to move forward with its plans for a Boxcar Market of fresh produce, flowers, handcrafts. What a wonderful, visual way to bring back this fascinating part of West Chicago's history!*



Sara Phalen is a superstar leader for the community's cultural and historical programs. In today's digital age, she finds creative ways to record current history and share West Chicago's past through engaging art-inspired exhibits and mobile apps. At the City Museum, 30,000 items are digitally scanned and available to the public. Current news items are screenshot to actively record contemporary history. Thirty students were trained to take oral histories of Mexican American residents and identify their contributions to West Chicago over the past 100 years. The histories were then transcribed and digitized for easy access. Even, the museum's telephone booth is equipped with a recording studio to record walk-ins' oral histories.

The community has designated two historic districts – East Washington Street and Turner Junction – and a number of historic structures like St. Michael's church, Kruse House and train depot. We commend the City for its Central-Main Street Redevelopment Plan and are hopeful for the plan's implementation as City builds on its recent economic development success in other parts of the community.

The judges were impressed with West Chicago's rich food culture, reflective of its diverse population. Given today's growing interest in global cuisines, we encourage West Chicago to promote its unique food establishments. Consider hosting a [restaurant week](#) and promoting culinary travel stories and Taste West Chicago food tours through the DuPage and Illinois tourism offices. For inspiration, see the [Columbus Food Adventure Tours](#). Invite restaurant and food reporters to town for a [fam tour](#) (or familiarization tour) ideally during the fall food festival or the Mexican Independence Day festival.

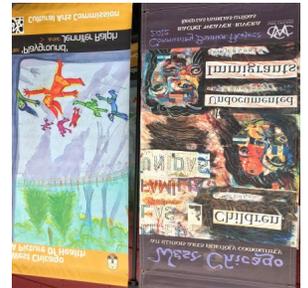
Overall Impression (OI) Criterion Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)					
7. OVERALL IMPRESSION (OI): adequate and effective amenities are provided in good condition, and the community is welcoming and attractive	Not Applicable N/A	Not Started (0 pts)	Launched (1 pt)	Achieved (2 pts)	Surpassing (3 pts)	Excelling (4 pts)
a. Leadership and Policy						
OI.a.01 - Signage ordinances enacted and enforced				X		
OI.a.02 - Ordinances in place to address overgrown lots, abandoned vehicles, unscreened dumpsters, public nuisances, unregulated garage sales, empty storefront windows, etc.					X	
OI.a.03 - Code enforcement/compliance officer on municipal staff and codes are enforced					X	
OI.a.04 - Design style determined, applied, and consistent for: site furnishings, crosswalks, gateway entry features, banners, wayfinding signage, etc.					X	
b. Amenities						
OI.b.01 - Site furnishings in place: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles				X		
OI.b.02 - Crosswalks well-marked				X		
OI.b.03 - Public restrooms available				X		
OI.b.04 - Effective community gateway entry features				X		
OI.b.05 - Effective use of banners, murals, and/or public art						X
OI.b.06 - Effective wayfinding signage			X			
OI.b.07 - Effective use of non-plant seasonal decorations (lights, ornaments, etc.)				X		
c. Condition and Maintenance						
OI.c.01 - Condition of structures, buildings, decks, patios related to lack of vandalism, graffiti, peeling or faded paint, and rust				X		
OI.c.02 - Condition of infrastructure: roadways, road shoulders, curbs, medians, sidewalks, crosswalks/pavement markings, transformers, and utility poles related to lack of weeds, vandalism, litter, graffiti, peeling or faded paint, and rust					X	
OI.c.03 - Condition of signs and site furnishings: water features, lamp posts, benches, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, trash and recycling receptacles, containers, planters, and cigarette receptacles					X	
OI.c.04 - Condition of vacant lots, stormwater retention ponds, and swales						X
OI.c.05 - Lack of snipe/stake signs, billboards, and posted flyers					X	
OI.c.06 - Regularly scheduled street sweeping				X		

d. Community Involvement						
Ol.d.01 - Volunteer funding and/or participation in community revitalization and improvement initiatives, such as Adopt-A-Spot, Habitat for Humanity, River Sweep, home repair programs (CHIP), disaster relief, clean-up days, etc.						X
Ol.d.02 - Process is available for residents to fund public amenities such as memorial benches, brick pathways, etc.						X
e. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note						
Ol.e.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	NS	NS		X
Banner art program and downtown vacancy window clings						
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage			
7. Overall Impression (OI)	80	55	68.75%			

Overall Impression (OI) Recommendations:



West Chicago is a very welcoming and inviting community! The city’s four gateway signs clearly highlight its railway heritage with the steam engine in its logo. Public art abounds with impressive commissioned pieces, beautiful murals, one-of-a-kind street banners, and community art collaborations. The “Butterfly Effect” public art project of 36 butterflies was a highlight of the judges’ visit. Crafted with different materials and in a variety of colors, the sculptures beautifully illustrate the community’s cooperative spirit, its diversity and its

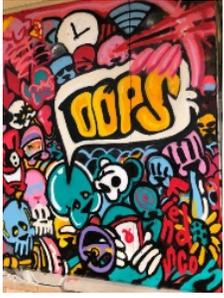


Monarch/pollinator conservation commitment. *For the winter, consider displaying the butterflies collectively indoors at the library or another public building.*



Downtown, the window clings in empty storefronts inspire future uses for prospective tenants. No doubt, the impending redevelopment plans will play a pivotal role in fueling this overall revitalization effort. The judges appreciated the improvements made at Sesquicentennial Park which serves as a visible entry point for many train commuters.

West Chicago’s people are a big part of what makes the community so welcoming and inviting. Volunteers turn out in high numbers for festivals, clean ups and community service projects. *As the 2018 judges recommended, remember it’s important to set up systems to record these volunteer hours. The totals will be impressive and helpful in securing grant money to fund future projects.*



At Gallery 200, a teen graffiti artist created a lovely fix to a broken window with his clever interpretation of the crash into the window. *Look for another more permanent place to showcase this young artist's talents. The underpass by Sesquicentennial Park and by the train tracks is one possibility.*



The butterfly mural (below left) planned for Supermercado Tampico will be a wonderful tribute to the City's Monarch commitment. *We also encourage you to look for other public places to showcase art pieces stored at Gallery 200. For example, the West Chicago letter art (below right) could be transformed into T-shirts or replicated on the city's water tower. Also consider wrapping utility boxes with art vinyls like those in the AIB community of Athens, Ohio.*

For 2019, please note the criteria for Overall Impression category has been expanded and impacts the category's total score.



Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Definition	Metrics Ratings (NS = Not Scored)		
8. EVALUATION TOUR PREPARATION AND ACTIONS (ET): community's readiness prior to and the action during the Evaluation Tour	Not Applicable N/A	Unmet (0 pts)	Met (1 pt)
a. Prior to the Evaluation Tour			
ET.a.01 - Community Profile provided to judges at least two weeks prior to the judging date			X
ET.a.02 - Community Profile includes contacts with emails			X
ET.a.03 - Community Profile from a returning community makes it clear what is new and/or implemented from judges' recommendations (scored as N/A for a new community)			X
ET.a.04 - Evaluation Tour Itinerary and Community Map with boundaries provided to judges at least two weeks prior to their arrival			X
b. During the Evaluation Tour			
ET.b.01 - Evaluation Tour provided a representative cross-section of the community			X
ET.b.02 - Judges met with elected/appointed municipal leaders and/or staff			X
ET.b.03 - Judges met with the business and/or non-profit community			X
ET.b.04 - Judges met with the media	X		
ET.b.05 - Judges met with volunteers			X
ET.b.06 - Judges were asked to give a presentation(s)		X	
c. Final Wrap-Up			
ET.c.01 - Enough time was allotted for judges to work on the Evaluation Tour Report in a quiet place with adequate Wi-Fi availability		X	
ET.c.02 - Community participated in a wrap-up session at the end of the Evaluation Tour			X
ET.c.03 - Evaluation Report metrics were adequately addressed in the Community Profile and/or Evaluation Tour Itinerary and during the Evaluation Tour			X
d. Judges' Discretion: Recognition by the judges of an item of special note			
ET.d.01 - Judges to enter text below		NS	X
Enthusiasm and cooperative spirit of the community			
Totals:	Possible Points	Actual Points	Percentage
8. Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET)	13.00	11.00	84.62%

Evaluation Tour Preparation and Actions (ET) Recommendations:



West Chicago provided a thorough and well-written community profile and paralleled much of the judging criteria on the scoresheet. The itinerary provided a broad cross-section of the community, allowing judges the opportunity to meet dedicated volunteers, government officials and community leaders. While we so enjoyed the time at the state-of-the-art EduCare school and the We Grow Dreams greenhouse, the scoring sheet didn't allow us much opportunity to score those efforts. Perhaps for future tours, plan longer stops at places that generate the most points and shorter stops at those with less influence on the score.

DISCLAIMERS:

1. Communities are responsible for addressing the metrics in the Community Profile, Evaluation Tour Itinerary, and during the Evaluation Tour. Please note that the metric calculations contained herein are final, and each community is encouraged to focus on any changes during the following year's entry in the America in Bloom National Awards Program.
2. All information is given to the best of America in Bloom's knowledge and is believed to be accurate. Your conditions of use and application of recommendations and/or suggested products are beyond our control. There is no warranty expressed or implied regarding the accuracy of any given data or statements. America in Bloom specifically disclaims any responsibility or liability relating to the use of the recommendations and/or suggested products and shall under no circumstances whatsoever, be liable for any special, incidental or consequential damages which may arise from such use.
3. Reference herein to any specific commercial products, processes, or service by trade named trademark manufacturer or otherwise does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation or favoring by America in Bloom. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein shall not be used for advertising or product endorsement purposes.

2019 Community Recognitions

Community: West Chicago, IL

Recognized Criterion: Celebrating Heritage

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The City keeps its train history alive through the annual Railroad Days Festival, museum displays of the boxcar camps, and interpretive signage along the Prairie Path. West Chicago was chosen as the only Illinois stop for the Union Pacific Great Race Across the Midwest with the Big Boy steam engine which attracted 45,000 visitors.

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Noteworthy Project or Initiative: Butterfly Effect public art project

The Butterfly Effect, a public art project of the West Chicago Cultural Arts Commission, West Chicago Garden Club, People Made Visible and the America in Bloom Committee, featured 36 artist-designed butterflies and displayed them in public gardens throughout the City. The display promotes pollinator conservation and encourages the exploration of all corners of West Chicago.