

2025-2027 Economic Development Work Plan

The following **Economic Development Priorities** are intended to foster and cultivate an environment in which commercial, cultural and community enterprises will flourish within the corporate limits of the City of West Chicago

<b>Priority Categories</b>			
	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Applicable Reference Document</b>	<b>Activity Year</b>
	<i>Initiatives/Activities</i>		
<b>1. Activate businesses, community partners, residents &amp; visitors</b>			
1.1	Advocate for ways to activate the downtown	Economic Development Plan	Ongoing
1.1A	<i>Join a network of downtown advocates to gain access to grant funding by becoming a Network Member of the Illinois Main Street Association and attending the annual conference</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan</i>	2025
1.1B	<i>Encourage collaboration on shop local and/or promotional campaigns and coordinate seasonal decorations and other aesthetics to create a cohesive experience in the downtown by meeting regularly (semi-annually or quarterly) with the downtown business and property owners</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan</i>	2025
1.1C	<i>Partner with private entities to coordinate the creation of tactical urbanism or "popup" events in the downtown</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	2026
1.1D	<i>Support cultivation of a vibrant arts scene in the downtown</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan</i>	2027
1.2	Engage larger businesses to support the development of community identity components, including public art, landscaping, events and marketing	Comprehensive Plan	2027

<b>2. Advocate for the interests of business &amp; investment opportunities</b>			
2.1	Streamline business-related processes, including occupancy, registration & licensing	Economic Development Plan	Ongoing
2.1A	<i>Provide a clear roadmap for how businesses can access various business-related services on the website</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	2025
2.1B	<i>Align fees associated with various business-related services with the cost of delivering services and priority business incentives, if applicable</i>		2026
2.1C	<i>Evaluate the potential to integrate processes into a single (or linked) online application</i>		2026
2.1D	<i>If an integrated application process is a possibility, implement the consolidated or coordinated online application process. Minimally, have all business-related applications online.</i>		2026

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2.2	Review business-related policies to create business friendly codes	Economic Development Plan	Ongoing
2.2A	<i>Nurture home-based businesses to support growth into commercial locations via business registration initially</i>		2025
2.2B	<i>Assist local entrepreneurs turning vacant buildings into new businesses (adaptive reuse) by implementing the Downtown Investment Program</i>	Comprehensive Plan	2025
2.2C	<i>Expand the uses permitted in the downtown to include artisan manufacturing, arts and culture, child and elder care, medical services and shared workspaces, among others</i>	Comprehensive Plan	2025
2.2D	<i>Respond to shifts in business industries by amending business registration and licensing regulations</i>	Economic Development Plan	2026
2.2E	<i>Consider implementing density bonuses for downtown Transit-Oriented Development</i>	Strategic Plan	2026

<b>3. Attract new investment, customers, employees &amp; residents</b>			
3.1	Prepare downtown for investment opportunities	Central-Main St Redevelopment Plan	Ongoing
3.1A	<i>Encourage continued property maintenance and private investment, utilizing code enforcement efforts when appropriate</i>	Economic Development Plan	2025
3.1B	<i>Complete preliminary soils tests for blocks 1-5 in the downtown</i>	Central-Main St Redevelopment Plan	2025
3.1C	<i>Bid package for demolition and site prep (blocks 2, 3, 4)</i>	Central-Main St Redevelopment Plan	2025
3.1D	<i>Survey City-owned properties in Blocks 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5</i>	Central-Main St Redevelopment Plan	2025
3.2	Support the marketing of available properties	Economic Development Plan	Ongoing
3.2A	<i>Promote the downtown as a priority for redevelopment &amp; new businesses</i>	Central-Main St Redevelopment Plan	Ongoing
3.2B	<i>Actively recruit housing developers by partnering with existing land owners to market sites</i>	Economic Development Plan	Ongoing
3.2C	<i>Partner with existing property owners to support filling vacant properties</i>	Economic Development Plan & Strategic Plan	Ongoing
3.2C-1	<i>Identify expanding retailers for specific vacant spaces to address variability in (and expected loss of) retail sales by subscribing to Retail Lease Trac</i>	Strategic Plan	2025
3.2C-2	<i>Attract new retailers &amp; restaurants to the downtown as well as support existing retailers &amp; restaurants in the downtown via the revised Retail &amp; Restaurant Grant Program</i>	Comprehensive Plan	2025

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3.2D	<i>Promote the redevelopment of the Mosaic Crossing Shopping Center to include a mix of residential, office, medical &amp; hotel uses along with retail &amp; restaurants</i>	<i>Strategic Plan &amp; Market Study for the Route 59-North Ave Study Area</i>	2026
3.3	Embrace manufacturing as the predominant sector	Economic Development Plan & Strategic Plan	Ongoing
3.3A	<i>Work with regional partners (Choose DuPage, GCEP, World Business Chicago, Intersect Illinois) to increase opportunities to attract new manufacturers</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
3.3B	<i>Support the manufacturing talent pipeline by participating in Greater Chicago Advanced Manufacturing Partnership (GCAMP)</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan &amp; Comprehensive Plan</i>	2025
3.3C	<i>Explore potential partnership with Western DuPage Chamber of Commerce to develop local, direct workforce development support for existing manufacturers</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan &amp; Strategic Plan</i>	2026

4. Connect people, places & things			
4.1	Modernize infrastructure to support continued investment & attract businesses	Economic Development Plan	Ongoing
4.1A	<i>Consider the use of development incentives &amp; public financing tools to make roadway &amp; infrastructure improvements</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
4.1A-1	<i>Complete the reconstruction of Nuclear Dr and Northwest Ave</i>	<i>2022 Pavement Management Report</i>	2025
4.1A-2	<i>Implement infrastructure and streetscape improvements in the downtown with assistance from Rebuild Downtowns &amp; Main Streets Captial Grant &amp; ITEP</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan &amp; Central-Main St Redevelopment Plan</i>	2025
4.1B	<i>Evaluate coordinating economic development efforts with capital improvements to mark each corridor in a distinctive manner</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	2026
4.1B-1	<i>Evaluate opportunities to install pedestrian safety and traffic calming techniques at the Neltnor Blvd and Washington &amp; Main St intersections, including wayfinding signage</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	2026
4.1B-2	<i>Evaluate the community's sidewalk &amp; trail connectivity as well as street lighting coverage to assess the priorities for improvements to public safety &amp; community appearance</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	2026

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4.2	Create opportunities for businesses to connect with capital providers	Comprehensive Plan	Ongoing
4.2A	<i>Coordinate match-making events to bring together entrepreneurs and local investors, particularly to fill vacant spaces in the downtown</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan</i>	<i>2025</i>
4.2B	<i>Connect small businesses to capital opportunities, including microfinance organizations, community development financial institutions &amp; community banks</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2025</i>

<b>5. Educate the City, businesses, community partners and general public on economic development opportunities</b>			
5.1	Create a reliable online resource for economic & business development activities	Strategic Plan	2025
5.1A	<i>Provide a comprehensive webpage for all business and economic development services and resources by redesigning the current page</i>	<i>Strategic Plan</i>	<i>2025</i>
5.1B	<i>Consider creating a community job board as a one-stop shop for employment within the City</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2027</i>
5.2	Evaluate parking minimums, particularly on Roosevelt Rd, to identify opportunities for outlot development on existing sites	Strategic Plan	2025
5.3	Provide greater opportunities for the general public to learn about businesses in the community	Comprehensive Plan	2025
5.3A	<i>Publicize monthly business spotlight articles across various City communications channels</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2025</i>
5.3B	<i>Create a dining &amp; shopping guide to be distributed in print to new businesses as part of a Shop Local Program</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2026</i>
5.3C	<i>Create an online business directory to promote Shop Local</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2026</i>
5.4	Coordinate workshops and events with community partners to provide information on investment, potential funding opportunities, and budgeting techniques for local owners, entrepreneurs & residents	Comprehensive Plan	2025
5.4A	<i>Schedule quarterly workshops initially</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2025</i>
5.4B	<i>Pursue partnerships with the Mexican Cultural Center DuPage, Aurora Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Casa Michoacan to provide support for the Latino business community</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	<i>2025</i>
5.5	Evaluate the potential for creating a business incubator and/or accelerator program	Economic Development Plan & Strategic Plan	2026

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<b>6. Retain businesses, investment &amp; community support</b>			
6.1	Regularly visit businesses in the community	Comprehensive Plan & Strategic Plan	Ongoing
6.1A	<i>Prioritize meeting with businesses that play a critical role in the economy, including top sales tax revenue generators, top property tax payers, largest employers, downtown businesses, etc.</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan</i>	2025
6.1B	<i>Host an annual event with manufacturers to understand existing challenges within the manufacturing industry and provide business development resources</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan &amp; Comprehensive Plan</i>	2025
6.2	Conduct regular business surveys to identify warning flags for business relocation or expansion, receive feedback on programs & practices, and maintain ongoing communications with owners & managers	Comprehensive Plan	Ongoing
6.2A	<i>Include in the annual Business Registration Form - consider reducing fee for voluntary completion of the survey questions</i>		2025
6.2B	<i>Coordinate regional business owner meetings (downtown, Roosevelt Rd, North Ave at Neltnor Blvd, industrial parks) to support business retention and provide networking opportunities for the business owners</i>	<i>Comprehensive Plan &amp; Strategic Plan</i>	2025
6.3	Provide regular communication with the business community through the use of social media, business community newsletters & incorporate this on the EconDev website	Comprehensive Plan	Ongoing
6.3A	<i>Update on new businesses, development progress, business accomplishments, financial considerations, business development workshops &amp; community engagement opportunities</i>	<i>Economic Development Plan</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
6.4	Assemble workforce development statistics & share resources	Comprehensive Plan	2025
6.5	Establish a formal Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program	Economic Development Plan	2026