

West Chicago
Forward

West Chicago
Adelante



West Chicago Forward Economy



Understanding Context, Moving Forward

What will West Chicago look like in 20 years? What do you want it to look like, and how do you see yourself in that future city? The comprehensive planning process of West Chicago Forward is asking these kinds of big questions to ensure an inclusive and thoughtful Comprehensive Plan to guide West Chicago's future. One of the first steps to making a great Comprehensive Plan is gathering and analyzing information and statistics to get a full picture of life and circumstances in West Chicago today. We also are surveying West Chicago residents and business owners, and talking with many community members and other stakeholders, too. We have organized this research into three categories: People, Place, and Economy. These categories overlap in many ways, and we encourage you to visit all three topics—**People, Place, and Economy**—to see what we've found out.



West Chicago's Economy

West Chicago has long had a vibrant local economy and has been a center of regional employment for decades. With a generally strong business community, small restaurants and retailers thrive. West Chicago also has notable transportation advantages because of its truck routes and truck-to-train cargo transportation. West Chicago has a diverse employment base, too—a key strength of its economy. So, what does all of this look like?

27,347
residents

1,115
businesses

16,655
employees

20
industries

Construction
the most businesses

Manufacturing
the most employees

Wholesale Trade
largest volume
(over \$3 billion)

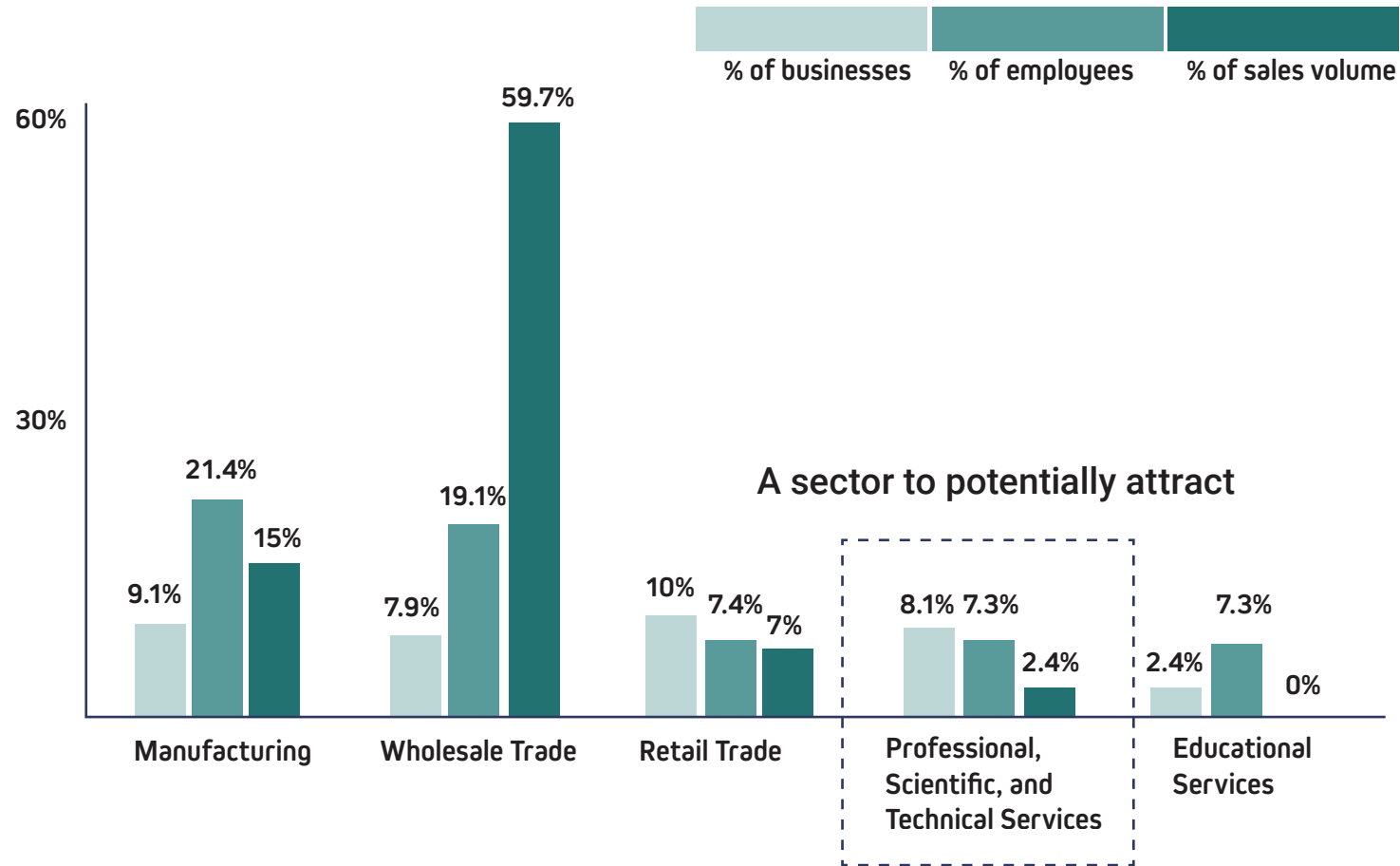
Over \$5 Billion
total West Chicago
sales volume

So what's next? Come join us. In the near future, we'll be holding a visioning event and other opportunities to help us build on what we've learned and envision the future of West



Growing Business in West Chicago

The City might want to work to attract additional investment into certain industries to **build on existing strengths, like manufacturing and wholesale trade, and support existing clusters.** Although West Chicago has just five businesses and only 20 employees who work in scientific research and development—a well-paying field, it may be good for West Chicago to attract more businesses in this field, which might support both the local economy and local households through higher-paying jobs.



Big Questions, Local Answers

We know that commercial districts just outside West Chicago pull some economic activity away from the heart of the City.

- What can we do to best support the economy and all businesses, big and small, in West Chicago?
- How should we be thinking about attracting new industries to the City so that we can increase business diversity and be ready to take advantage of new opportunities?

A hub for small businesses

When we look at business size in West Chicago, we see that almost all businesses in West Chicago are small businesses.

95%

West Chicago businesses have 50 or fewer employees

62%

West Chicago businesses have sales volumes of less than \$1 million.

West Chicago's Industrial Clusters

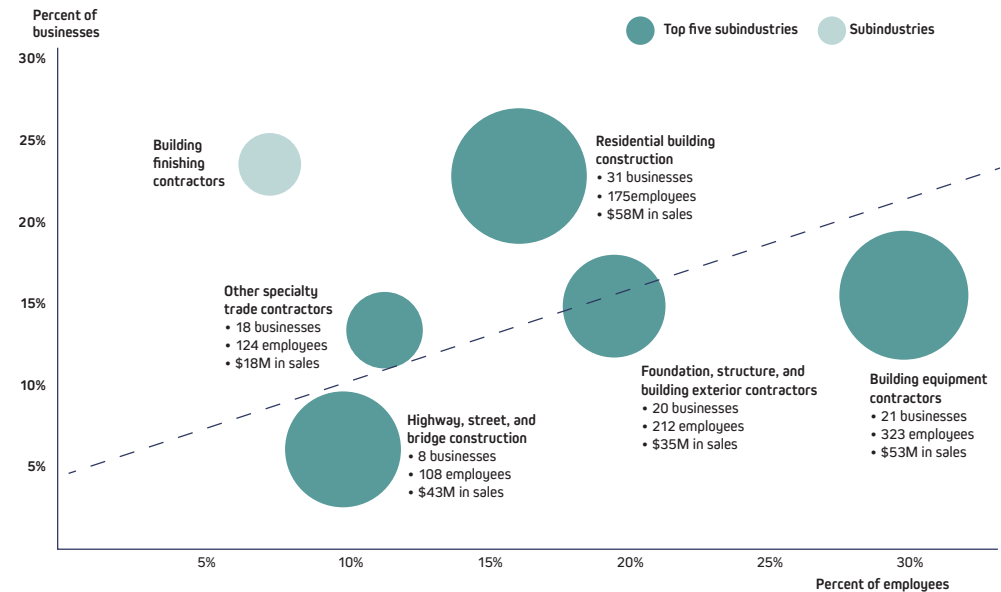
Looking closely at industry in West Chicago helps identify important subindustries and industry clusters, or groups of businesses located close to one another that are connected by type of business or product, suppliers, and so on. You might already know that most jobs in West Chicago are in the manufacturing industry. But did you know that within manufacturing, printing has the greatest number of businesses, and manufacturing of paper products the greatest number of employees?

There are more construction businesses in West Chicago than any other kind of business, including businesses in the areas of residential building construction and building equipment contracting.

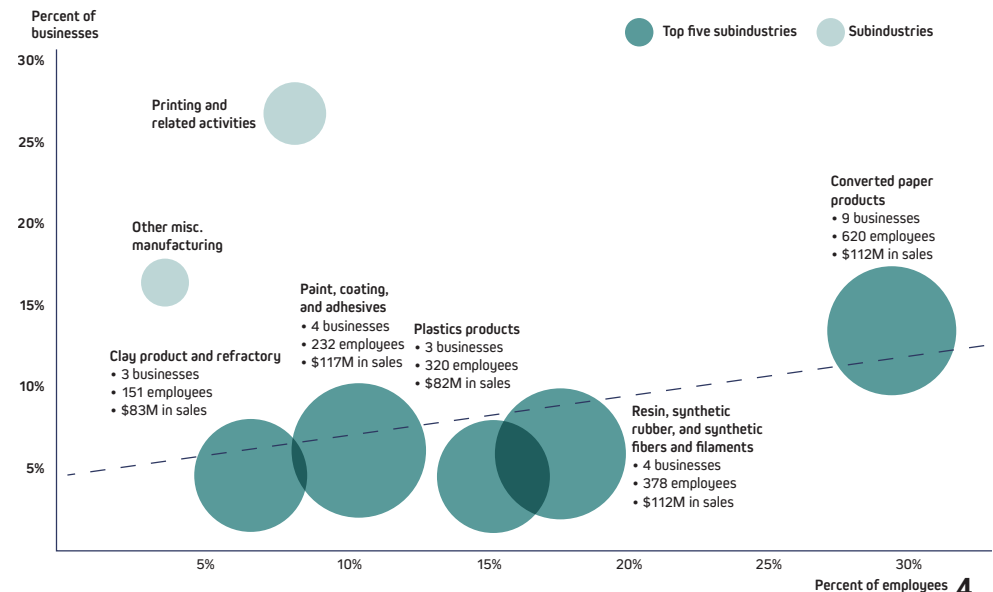
The strongest industry cluster in DuPage County is marketing, education, and information technology. The most prominent clusters in West Chicago are...

- Metalworking technology
- Biopharmaceuticals
- Seed and plant distribution (Ball Horticultural Company, with almost 500 employees in the City)
- Aviation
- Advanced manufacturing
- Logistics and wholesale

Construction Subindustries by Sales Volume, 2020



Subindustries within the Manufacturing Industry by Sales Volume, 2020



Thinking About the Future

So what can we do to best support the economy and all businesses, big and small, in West Chicago? And how should we be thinking about attracting new industries to the City so that we can increase business diversity and be ready to take advantage of new opportunities?

- There is great potential to **connect West Chicago's many small businesses to local suppliers**, giving an extra boost to local business, and those small businesses show strong job growth as well.
- Our recent experiences with COVID-19 show that **we need to be able to depend on a broad base of businesses** in order to be prepared for any potential economic changes or fluctuations in the future.
- **Some areas of the City have low population density. There are also land constraints**, which refers to how land can be used, such as determined by ownership or zoning, and how land is already used, such as forest preserves, the DuPage Airport, or industrial parks. These all constrain the space West Chicago has to grow. Because of that, increasing housing options, transportation, and other community assets could provide residents with easier access to local businesses. And by supporting the Downtown through a good mix of businesses and services, with various offerings and price points, we can help the area become the enjoyable space for which West Chicagoans are yearning.

