

Village of Westmont

Final Draft Strategic Plan for 2021

Who We Are

In ideal proximity to vital regional commercial and transportation assets, the Village of Westmont is a dynamic and richly diverse community nestled in southeast DuPage County. It is home to about 25,000 residents, engaging community life, fine restaurants, the arts and auto mile. The Village of Westmont is known for its events, extraordinary organizations, institutions and educational resources, and thriving commercial activity in west suburban Chicago.

The Village of Westmont was incorporated in 1921, and operates as a mayor-manager form of municipal government under Illinois law. Westmont was a vital source of bricks that helped rebuild Chicago after the great fire of 1871. It later became a center of agriculture and manufacturing. Prior to 1833, the area was inhabited by the Potawatomi Indians.

Village of Westmont Mission Statement

The expression of mission or purpose expresses the Village's fundamental reason for being.

Shaping a vibrant community and future
through connection, service and leadership

Guiding Principles

Guiding principles are our shared values and serve as guideposts for how we will be with each other.

The people of Westmont

1. Welcome and respect all stakeholders, perspectives and contributions
2. Exhibit integrity, honesty, trust and fairness
3. Actively participate in shaping and enriching our sense of community
4. Conscientiously lead and follow through
5. Hold a positive, high-spirited attitude
6. Welcome change and are solution-oriented
7. Listen well and communicate effectively
8. Think and act at our professional best

Our Vision for the Village of Westmont in 2021

Governance	<i>Visionary leadership and partnership position us to elevate our quality of life.</i>
Identity and Image	<i>Westmont exemplifies beautiful, dynamic, cohesive community life.</i>
Downtown	<i>Our celebrated Downtown is the cornerstone of our community, and inspires, attracts and pulses with vitality.</i>
Economic Development	<i>Vibrant business corridors generate superior economic performance.</i>
Infrastructure	<i>Seamless integration of facilities and systems optimize our mobility and utility management.</i>

Strategic Action Plan

Governance: Visionary leadership and partnership position us to elevate our quality of life.

Goal 1 – Leadership and Authority: Lead with clarity and resolve.

Strategy 1. Be visionary and strategic.

- Develop wise and discerning citizens and citizen-leaders to co-create our promising future.
- Align Village policy and management decisions with the Strategic Vision and Plan for 2021, and ensure Plan implementation and accountability utilizing a committee to oversee, monitor and report on progress and performance.
- Systematically review and update the Village Code and related regulations to reflect contemporary standards and practices that meet community needs.

Strategy 2. Establish the optimal structure, authority and geographic boundaries to effectively govern the Village.

- Explore and evaluate regaining home rule powers to effectively address fiscal health and quality governance.
- Sensibly expand our geographic boundaries through annexation of unincorporated areas.

Strategy 3. Attain financial sufficiency and stability and adapt to changing fiscal conditions.

- Develop a financial plan and sustainable strategies to include projections and contingency plans.
- Increase and diversify the tax base and identify and pursue alternative revenue sources.
- Systematically evaluate levels of municipal service to serve community needs, and establish a fair and appropriate cost and fee structure.

Strategy 4. Cultivate relationships to engender understanding, collaboration and effectiveness.

- Strengthen and maintain active intergovernmental relationships with entities within and beyond Westmont to enhance common ground, camaraderie and cultivate support for shared services and consolidation where possible.
- Maintain comfortable rapport with homeowners associations, educational institutions, youth groups, service organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses and others.
- Increase participation and dialogue with regional agencies/organizations.

Goal 2 – Municipal Services and Facilities: Conduct municipal functions efficiently and effectively.

Strategy 1. Institute operational efficiencies and streamline Village programs and services.

- Combine Public Works Street and Water facilities to achieve public works service delivery efficiencies.
- Streamline and simplify the permit process while upholding desired standards and regulations that meet safety and aesthetic objectives.
- Partner with other governmental entities to pool resources, consolidate or share services wherever possible to minimize costs.

Strategy 2. Honor and equip our municipal employees.

- Employ quality, skilled personnel, and provide fair and equitable compensation and employment benefits.
- Establish appropriate staffing levels to provide the chosen levels of service.
- Educate, train and cross train to ensure employee capabilities meet community needs.
- Foster a sense of team spirit across the organization.
- Facilitate effective, timely multi-directional communication.

Strategy 3. Ensure municipal facilities and equipment are equal to the needs they must fulfill.

- Make needed improvements and upgrades to municipal buildings and equipment.
- Utilize up-to-date technology solutions to effect operational best practices.

Identity and Image: Westmont exemplifies beautiful, dynamic, cohesive community life.

Goal 1 – Community Engagement: Invite and engage the entire community in creating Westmont life.

Strategy 1. Strengthen cohesiveness and shared identity throughout the Village.

- Create a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment in attitude, communication and action.
- Maintain quality, popular community events that bring people together and celebrate all that Westmont has to offer.
- Ensure the Village remains family-friendly and retains its small-town feel.
- Engage residents from every walk of life and at all stages of life.

Strategy 2. Inspire the passion to get and stay involved.

- Intentionally develop relationships and dialogue with stakeholders and groups not yet engaged in Village life.
- Foster the spirit of volunteerism among all stakeholders.
- Invite new ideas, initiatives and people.

Goal 2 – Quality and Aesthetics: Elevate the quality and beauty of the Village to enhance our sense of place.

Strategy 1. Beautify existing business and residential areas and establish aesthetic and quality standards.

- Invest in streetscape improvements for all business corridors by implementing the Comprehensive Plan streetscape recommendations.
- Create and implement a beautification plan for the railroad corridor, Village gateways and business alleyways.
- Honor the natural environment and encourage green initiatives and sustainable building practices in accord with Environmental Improvement Commission recommendations.

Strategy 2. Ensure housing quality, diversity and balance meet the needs of our community.

- Ensure a wide range of quality housing types and prices.
- Find and establish the optimal balance between owner-occupied and rental housing.
- Encourage housing options that allow residents to age in place.
- Enforce building and fire codes and ordinances.

Goal 3 – Brand and Reputation: Develop a brand and reputation that reflect our highest aspirations.

Strategy 1. Define and develop an identity that portrays our core strengths, uplifting history and dynamic environment.

- Engage expertise to define the Westmont Brand.
- Portray our pride, friendly, industrious personality, creativity and agility.
- Feature our core strengths of location, size, heritage, music, education and cultural diversity.
- Capture the wide range of community educational, recreational, health, events and organizational assets.
- Celebrate our cooperative nature and commitment to core values.

Strategy 2. Broadcast the exciting story of Westmont as a preferred place to live, learn, work, play and do business.

- Articulate and disseminate the Westmont story, and utilize multi-media to market the Westmont Brand.
- Capitalize on our centralized location and extensive transportation resources.
- Feature local business opportunities and the value of commercial and residential property within the community.
- Tout our unique business clusters, including restaurants, fine arts, auto mile, lodging and quality education.
- Signal our pride and extend a warm welcome with attractive branding signage at gateways.

Downtown: Our celebrated Downtown is the cornerstone of our community, and inspires, attracts and pulses with vitality.

Goal 1 – Defined Downtown: Create a substantial Downtown with a high-quality demographic mix.

Strategy 1. Re-envision, reconfigure and expand the Downtown area to achieve the ideal scale and layout for commerce, community gathering, dining and entertainment.

- Secure investors, developers, brokers and architects who can help us leverage our local and regional assets.
- Pursue responsible mixed use development to include high-density, high-end, multi-unit dwellings near the Downtown.
- Assemble parcels to maximize redevelopment closer to the core.
- Fully explore widening the Downtown area east to west.
- Secure green and open space for public gathering.

Strategy 2. Establish Downtown business demographics that accentuate desirability, convenience, choice and family-friendliness.

- Maximize restaurant and residential density as key to Downtown development.
- Implement the Downtown recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Recruit unique, niche business opportunities.
- *See the Economic Development section of the Strategic Plan for a discussion of means to diversify and attract business and development.*

Goal 2 – Spirited Downtown: Design a welcoming Downtown that embraces and engages residents and visitors.

Strategy 1. Integrate natural beauty and open space with an aesthetically pleasing, thriving and upbeat environment.

- Create accessible Downtown open/green spaces for families and others to enjoy, meet friends and to host community events.
- Develop a uniform Downtown streetscape.
- Beautify the train depot and railway area.
- Cultivate business operators' pride in the Downtown's appearance.
- Aggressively enforce standards with building owners and remediate non-compliant, neglected properties.

Strategy 2. Thoughtfully select amenities and attractions to engage Downtown visitors.

- Narrate and interpret Westmont's historical connections (history of bricks and music) throughout public spaces and the streetscape.
- Highlight the William L. Gregg House and Muddy Waters' home.
- Enliven the Downtown with a water feature, public art and community gardens.
- Attract and co-create entertainment venues, a fine arts facility and a concert venue.

Economic Development: Vibrant business corridors generate superior economic performance.

Goal 1 – Plan: Create an Economic Development Plan that defines our vision and guides implementation.

Strategy 1. Signal our intentions, and articulate a clear and uplifting vision of Westmont's successful economic future.

- Re-envision Westmont as vibrant, evolving and at its ultimate best.
- Leverage our quality business and commercial assets and set a high standard for future development.

Strategy 2. Expand, diversify and upgrade the overall appearance, use and functionality of each business corridor.

- Be open to redistribution and consolidation of prime retail, corporate and open space.
- Use transit-oriented design strategies and resources where practical.
- Optimize tourism opportunities.

Goal 2 – Invest: Apply the necessary resources and skills to implement the Economic Development Plan.

Strategy 1. Engage expertise to create, maintain and achieve the Economic Development Plan.

- Assign the Westmont Economic Development Partnership and its stakeholders with the creation, oversight and evaluation of the Economic Development Plan.
- Retain economic development consultant expertise, personnel and other resources necessary to create and fulfill the Economic Development Plan.

Strategy 2. Skillfully employ economic development best practices in a business-friendly environment.

- Maximize development opportunities of our two existing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts.
- Identify geographic and demographic demands and gaps.
- Entice visionary partners for commercial and residential development.
- Create incentives to attract and retain a strong and diversified business base.
- Keep up to date and actively utilize the economic development goals of the Westmont Comprehensive Plan.
- Ensure Village policies and practices are business-friendly and align with our economic goals.

Infrastructure: Seamless integration of facilities and systems optimize our mobility and utility management.

Goal 1 – Utility Systems: Ensure the integrity of our utility systems.

Strategy 1. Aggressively address stormwater management conditions.

- Develop and implement the Stormwater Management Plan.
- Monitor and report on progress of the Stormwater Management Plan implementation.

Strategy 2. Upgrade and maintain infrastructure systems to meet capacity.

- Secure a location and install the third water tower.
- Continue replacement of aging water mains.

Goal 2 – Mobility and Access: Provide a quality transportation system to enhance local circulation.

Strategy 1. Upgrade transportation infrastructure to facilitate vehicular movement.

- Evaluate the feasibility of a second at-grade railroad crossing.
- Continue to repair and reconstruct roadways.
- Preserve accessibility of alleyways and create a plan for alley maintenance.

Strategy 2. Provide adequate, convenient parking opportunities Downtown and in the business corridors.

- Create a parking plan for the Central Business District (CBD), including investigation of all types of parking solutions, to serve businesses, visitors, residents and commuters.
- Identify and purchase property in the business corridors to facilitate parking solutions.

Strategy 3. Make Westmont walkable, and safe and inviting for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Explore the possibility of a pedestrian under- or overpass at the Cass Avenue railroad crossing.
- Create and implement a curb and sidewalk plan.
- Promote Westmont bike corridors.