West Town

West Town, three miles northwest of the Loop, is “best understood as an amalgam of several distinct neighborhoods” that includes Humboldt Park, Noble Square, Ukrainian Village and Wicker Park. In the late 19th century, West Town was home to immigrants from Germany, Scandinavia, Poland, Russia, Italy and Ukraine. Later, the community attracted immigrants from Puerto Rico and Mexico, and in the 1970s the African-American population increased.

Wicker Park and Bucktown became popular with artists and students in the late 20th century. As restaurants, bars and shops proliferated and parts of the neighborhood began to gentrify, rising real estate costs displaced many lower-income residents to neighborhoods north and west. Community organizations such as the West Town Community Alliance and the Greater West Town Community Development Project (GWTP) focus on ensuring that all residents have a voice in the neighborhood, are able to remain there and can take advantage of educational and economic opportunities.

HIC survey participants asked how common violence is in their community: 39% said “extremely” or “very.”
Who lives here?

- **84,559** people live in West Town. The average household size is **2.2** people, compared to an average Chicago household size of **2.6** people.²

- West Town is more densely populated than Chicago overall, with a population per square mile of **18,479.7** people compared to **11,841.8** people per square mile in Chicago.³

- Between 2000 and 2010, West Town’s population decreased by **6.3%**, similar to population change in Chicago overall, where the population decreased by **6.9%** during the same period.⁴

### RACE AND ETHNICITY⁵

A majority of the population of West Town is white.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>West Town</th>
<th>Chicago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57.8%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### AGE⁶

The population of West Town is slightly younger than the city of Chicago average, with a median age of **31.7** as compared to the citywide average of **33.3**.
What are the potential barriers to good health?

HARDSHIP INDEX
West Town’s hardship index is 10, based on the following statistics (West Town at left, Chicago at right):

CHILD OPPORTUNITY INDEX
The Child Opportunity Index (COI) assigns a “high” ranking to West Town’s educational opportunities; “moderate” to health and environmental opportunities; and “very high” to social and economic opportunities. This gives the neighborhood an overall COI ranking of “very high.”

LACK OF HEALTH INSURANCE
West Town residents have health insurance at a slightly higher rate than residents of the rest of the city and residents of the U.S. overall. Chicago’s percentage of people without insurance is significantly higher than the percentage in the U.S., which is 13.3% of the population.

HIC survey participants asked whether they had not sought medical care due to cost anytime in the past 12 months: 70.8% said “no.”
What is the impact of the barriers?

YEARS OF POTENTIAL LIFE LOST

West Town ranks 63rd among Chicago's 77 neighborhoods in total number of years of potential life lost annually. Annual years of potential life lost per 100,000 residents aged 75 and younger due to selected causes of death: 5,249.

What resources make life better?

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Some of West Town’s community assets include the following:

**Hospitals**
- Norwegian American Hospital
- Presence Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center, St. Mary Campus and St. Elizabeth Campus

**Public parks**
- Bertha Honore Palmer Park
- Bickerdike Square Park
- Humboldt Park
- Pulaski Park
- Smith Park
- Snowberry Playlot Park
- Superior Playlot Park
- Wicker Park
- Western Park

**Community-based health centers**
- ACCESS at Anixter Center
- CommunityHealth
- Erie Division Street - Erie Family Health Center
- Erie West Town - Erie Family Health Center
- Nazareth Family Health Center
- PCC Walk-In Wellness Center at Norwegian American Hospital
- PCC West Town Family Health Center
- PrimeCare Community Health Center - West Town
- Pro Health Medical Center

**School-based health centers**
- Erie Clemente Wildcats School-Based Health Center
- Erie De Diego Health Center

**CHA housing**
- Lidia Pucinska Apartments

**Grocery stores**
- Jewel-Osco
- Mariano’s

**Childcare centers**
- Casa Central CSC Child Development Center
- Centro Infantil Consuelo Lee Correjter
- Erie Community Center
- Erie Neighborhood House D.C. Program
- Onward Neighborhood House
- The Nicholson School

**Nursing facilities**
- Center Home for Hispanic Elderly
- Presence Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center
- Winston Manor CNV and Nursing

**Mental health center**
- Norwegian American Hospital
- Presence Saints Mary and Elizabeth Medical Center

**University**
- Resurrection University

**Pharmacies**
- CVS
- Walgreens

**Schools**
- Burr, Chopin, Columbus, De Diego, Mitchell, Talcott (Public, PK-8)
- Drummond, Lasalle II (Magnet, PK-8)
- Pritzker (Regional Gifted Center, PK-8)
- Sabin (Magnet, K-8)
- Ucan Academy (Special Education, 1-12)
- Esperanza (Special Education, 3-12)
- Clemente, Wells (Public, 9-12)
- Chicago Arts (Contract, 9-12)
- Magic Johnson-Humboldt Park (Citywide, 9-12)
- Wolcott School (Special Education, 9-12)

**Neighborhood organizations**
- Greater West Town Community Development Project
- West Town Community Alliance
ENDNOTES

1 www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1342.html.
2 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, West Town, www.cmap.illinois.gov/.
4 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, West Town.
5 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, West Town.
6 MetroPulse Community Data Snapshot, West Town.
7 data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/hardship-index/792q-4jt.
9 www.chicagohealthatlas.org/place/west_town.
10 www.chicagohealthatlas.org/place/west_town.
12 data.cityofchicago.org/Health-Human-Services/Public-Health-Statistics-Selected-underlying-cause/j6cj-r444.