

CHICAGO LANDMARK DISTRICT

Ukrainian Village



This well-preserved collection of workers cottages, single-family houses, Chicago-style flat buildings, and small apartments form a distinctive residential streetscape that tells the story of German, Polish, and, ultimately, Ukrainian immigrants who settled in the area throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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Ukrainian Village

By Meredith A. Morris
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Whether your client seeks a timeless, traditional neighborhood or a hot spot that's nearly as visible as Lincoln Park or Lakeview, Ukrainian Village may be the answer. Part of Chicago's West Town community, along with Wicker Park, Noble Square and Eckhart Park, Ukrainian Village is where old meets new. Think hipsters riding vintage bicycles.

Bounded by Division Street and Grand, Western and Damen avenues, Ukrainian Village is a "shifting neighborhood where Ukrainian immigrants and their culture meet with the artsy side of generation hip-hop," according to the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

It is "busy on the outside, quiet in the inside," said Chicago REALTOR® Brian Eby, agreeing with a memorable description he's read. Eby, of Arroyo Properties, Inc., lives in the neighborhood, where he has also worked for eight years. He values Ukrainian Village "as an island of stability" within Chicago's ever-changing urban landscape.

"It's like a time warp," he said. "It's timeless. You have beautiful streets, mature trees and a lot of sidewalk activity. People know each other's names when they are walking their dogs. On weekends, families who have been there for generations wear their Sunday best to church."

Eby works most frequently with young "hipsters" drawn by the neighborhood's affordable rental stock or families hoping to buy detached homes or two- or three-flats where they can live and serve as landlords.

On the other hand, Teresa McCauley-Coleman, a Broker Associate with CityNet real estate, inc., works with many newcomers enticed to the area by its affordable real estate and convenient location. McCauley-Coleman, who has been in the real estate industry for 23 years and lives nearby in West Town, said her typical client is a professional moving from Lincoln Park or Lakeview and looking for a condo, appreciative of the neighborhood's easy access to the Loop (about nine minutes by Blue Line), O'Hare (about 25 minutes by Blue Line), Interstates 290 and 55, and 90-94.

"I am seeing people who know the area and know they want to be there," McCauley-Coleman said. "They want to be near the restaurants and other places that fit their lifestyle."

Shifting Demographics

Demographically the neighborhood has changed significantly in the past decade, even if the change isn't felt in Ukrainian Village's Old World heart. In addition to a relatively recent influx of hipsters and young professionals, the arrival of more Hispanics has also altered the area's profile and brought an array of new markets, restaurant and stores. According to the online Urban Mapping resource, the population of Ukrainian Village is more than one-third Hispanic and more than one-third white, leaving all other races in the minority.

McCauley-Coleman believes the neighborhood has changed radically since she started selling homes there in 2001, recalling when her clients tended to perceive Ukrainian Village as "a little rough around the edges."

Then, McCauley-Coleman encouraged prospective buyers to take faith in the explosion of new and expanding restaurants and other businesses on Division Street and elsewhere in the neighborhood. They were "a sign of economic stability and growth," she said, adding, "I no longer need to explain this area. It's speaking for itself, over the past eight years."

Buyers today find more development, including rehabs and condos, in the neighborhood south of Chicago Avenue.

Timeless Streets

North of Chicago Avenue, the tranquil neighborhood feeling that attracts Eby to Ukrainian Village's residential streets has not changed much, however. For that reason, Eby speculates that a "disproportionate" number of property sales, or transfers, within the neighborhood are among families and never see a REALTOR® or the MLS.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Ukrainian Village



Inside of Kasia's Polish Deli



Kasia's owner Kasia Bober (right) and staff



Letizia's Natural Bakery

"There are homes that have been in families, or close friendly groups, for generations. While the homes are well-constructed and not inexpensive, you aren't going to see anything flashy or pretentious," he said. "From a real estate standpoint, whether you're an owner, buyer or investor, I'd say it's a solid, low-risk investment. The core of the neighborhood is not going to change much. You can see generations walking down the street together. There aren't many places where you can see that."

Neighborhood History

Even if you have never visited Ukrainian Village you've probably seen it from the expressway, marked by gorgeous domes of Eastern European Orthodox cathedrals visible from 90-94. Ornate churches include SS. Volodymyr and Olha, St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral and Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral, designed by Louis Sullivan.

Ukrainian Village was developed by German immigrants who settled there in the wake of the fire of 1871, according to the Encyclopedia of Chicago, a project of the Chicago History Museum, Newberry Library and Northwestern University. Yet after the neighborhood's first wave of Ukrainian and Russian immigration, from 1880 to 1910, Ukrainians outnumbered other ethnic groups. By 1930, estimates placed the Chicago Ukrainian population between 25,000 and 30,000 and the majority resided within this small area.

Originally, Ukrainian Village was a predominately working-class neighborhood populated by craftsmen hired to build the mansions of their wealthy Wicker Park neighbors, according to Wikipedia. Today, the neighborhood still houses about 10,000 ethnic Ukrainians, although gentrification is changing the demographic. Along with a fairly new Dominick's market and Starbucks, local destinations include the Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, the Ukrainian National Museum, and the Ukrainian Cultural Center.

The Ukrainian Village District, surrounded by Haddon Avenue, Thomas Street and Cortez Street between Damen and Leavitt Avenues,

also includes portions of Damen, Hoyne, Oakley and Leavitt Avenues designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002. The District features an excellent cross-section of residential building types dating from 1886 to the 1920s. Described by the City of Chicago as an important residential streetscape and extremely well-preserved collection of workers cottages, the District holds two- and three-flats, single family homes and large apartment buildings.

"East Village," Ukrainian Village's east edge, from Western to Ashland within the north and south borders of Division and Grand, was originally known as "East Ukrainian Village."

Ukrainian Village Today

According to Urban Mapping, Ukrainian Village has slightly more males than females and an average age of about 31, on par with the Chicago average. About 30 percent of households in the neighborhood are married couple families, and of those about 60 percent are families in which both adults are working.

McCauley-Coleman cites two factors as very important in developing the area's texture. First is the City of Chicago's decision more than nine years ago to move its administrative offices to the 1600 block of Chicago Avenue.

The addition means city employees are eating and shopping locally during the day and have been a boon to nearby businesses.

Second, the LaSalle Language Academy II has opened at Division and Honore streets and will be in full operation for the 2010-11 school year. A Chicago public magnet school, McCauley-Coleman says it is a significant enticement for families.

"My daughter is 14-months-old and it is a big consideration for me to stay in this area," she said.

Indeed, there are a lot of families. Eby enjoys the numerous summer festivals hosted by churches in the area, which has says are true family events.

What's selling in... West Town/Ukrainian Village?

FastSTATS fourth quarter 2009 (8024)

Attached Single Family	Detached Single Family
Units: 231	Units: 37
Median Price: \$333,000	Median Price: \$650,000

Check out neighborhood stats for all 77 Chicagoland neighborhoods at www.ChicagoREALTOR.com.

FastSTATS consists of average sales price, median sales price, market time, units sold and percent change for Chicago and the suburbs.

WELCOME TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Ukrainian Village



UV Housing



Authentic signage



Old Oak Tap

"That's when you see how many kids there really are in the neighborhood. It's a very Old World community," he said.

Neighborhood Favorites

Eby and McCauley-Coleman cite a number of favorite restaurants and other business destinations, known for their quality and longevity if not trendy appeal. Among them:

Chicago Avenue:

- **Alcala's Western Wear**, look for the huge horse statue outside, 1733 *W. Chicago*
- **Atomix**, café with vegan options, 1957 *W. Chicago*
- **Chickpea**, Middle Eastern café, 2018 *W. Chicago*
- **Darkroom**, a long-standing favorite bar for deejays and live music, 2210 *W. Chicago*
- **Hoosier Mama Pie Company**, pies and cakes adored by Indiana transplants and others, 1618 *W. Chicago*
- **Kasia's Polish Deli**, with pirogues voted Chicago's Best and enjoyed by President Clinton, Governor Edgar and Senator Simon, also visited by Martha Stewart, 2101 *W. Chicago*
- **Old Oak Tap**, a comfortable bar-restaurant, 2109 *W. Chicago*
- **Tumans**, neighborhood tavern, 2159 *W. Chicago*
- **Windy City Supermercado**, small market with fresh guacamole and home made salsa daily, *Chicago at Wood St.*

Division Street:

- **Adobo Grill** – restaurant, 2005 *W. Division*
- **Folklore**, Argentine grill, 2100 *W. Division*
- **Letizia's Natural Bakery**, coffee shop, 2144 *W. Division*
- **Pizza Metro**, 1707 *W. Division*
- **Milk and Honey**, café and bakery, its granola is sold at Whole Foods stores, 1922 *W. Division*
- **Smoke Daddy's**, barbecue and live music venue, 1804 *W. Division St.*

Other:

- **Bar De Ville**, tavern with a great jukebox, 1958 *W. Huron St.*
- **Empty Bottle**, a long-time favorite bar for live music, 1035 *N. Western Ave.*
- **Fiore's Domestic Import Deli**, a family-owned Italian deli with great pepper and egg sandwiches, 2258 *W. Erie St.* **CR**



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Neighborhood photos by Kali Loader of the Chicago Association of REALTORS®.



Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral