

April 18, 2024
Chicago Plan Commission
City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St.
Chicago, IL 60602

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), a 90-year-old independent, nonprofit policy and planning organization dedicated to building equity in the built environment, submits this written testimony in support of the Department of Planning and Development's 2024 update to the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy (SDP).

The SDP requires projects that receive public funding or need special approvals to incorporate sustainable design elements. It is a point-based system in which project teams select from a menu of strategies across a series of thematic categories. SDP was first implemented in 2004 and then modified in 2017 with the assistance of an advisory committee.

Since it was developed, the policy has expanded to move beyond green roof requirements to include elements that include (but are not limited to) energy, stormwater, water use, landscapes, and transportation. The 2017 update was a step in the right direction towards addressing major challenges the city is facing around climate change and sustainability, but the engagement process to complete the update was limited to mainly architects, developers, and others in the built environment industry. The engagement process for the 2024 update was much more expansive and included individuals from across different sectors with stakeholders from economic and community development, academic institutions, environmental advocates, developers, architects, and more. MPC participated in focus groups as well as facilitated conversations with River advocates as part of its role co-convening the River Ecology and Governance Task Force.

Opening the update process to a broader range of stakeholders has allowed for a number of different voices to shape the 2024 update, helping the City remove redundant and/or obsolete requirements, while allowing for new strategies to foster innovation and flexibility. In particular, MPC supports the addition of updates that will positively impact Chicago's rivers and its neighboring communities through strategies that focus on naturalizing river edges, increasing river setbacks, and providing greater and more diverse spaces of aquatic habitat. We are also pleased to see a focus on affordable housing and air quality as these strategies will increase community benefits and improve public health outcomes across the city.

MPC appreciates the City's commitment to leading an engaged process, and we are optimistic that the 30-day public comment period will provide an opportunity for even greater resident feedback to guide revisions for a final policy. MPC believes that this update moves the city in the direction of greater sustainability and resiliency for development projects without putting undue burden on developers, and we look forward to contributing during the public comment period over the next month.

Sincerely,



Kendra J. Freeman
Vice President of Programs and Strategic Impact

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