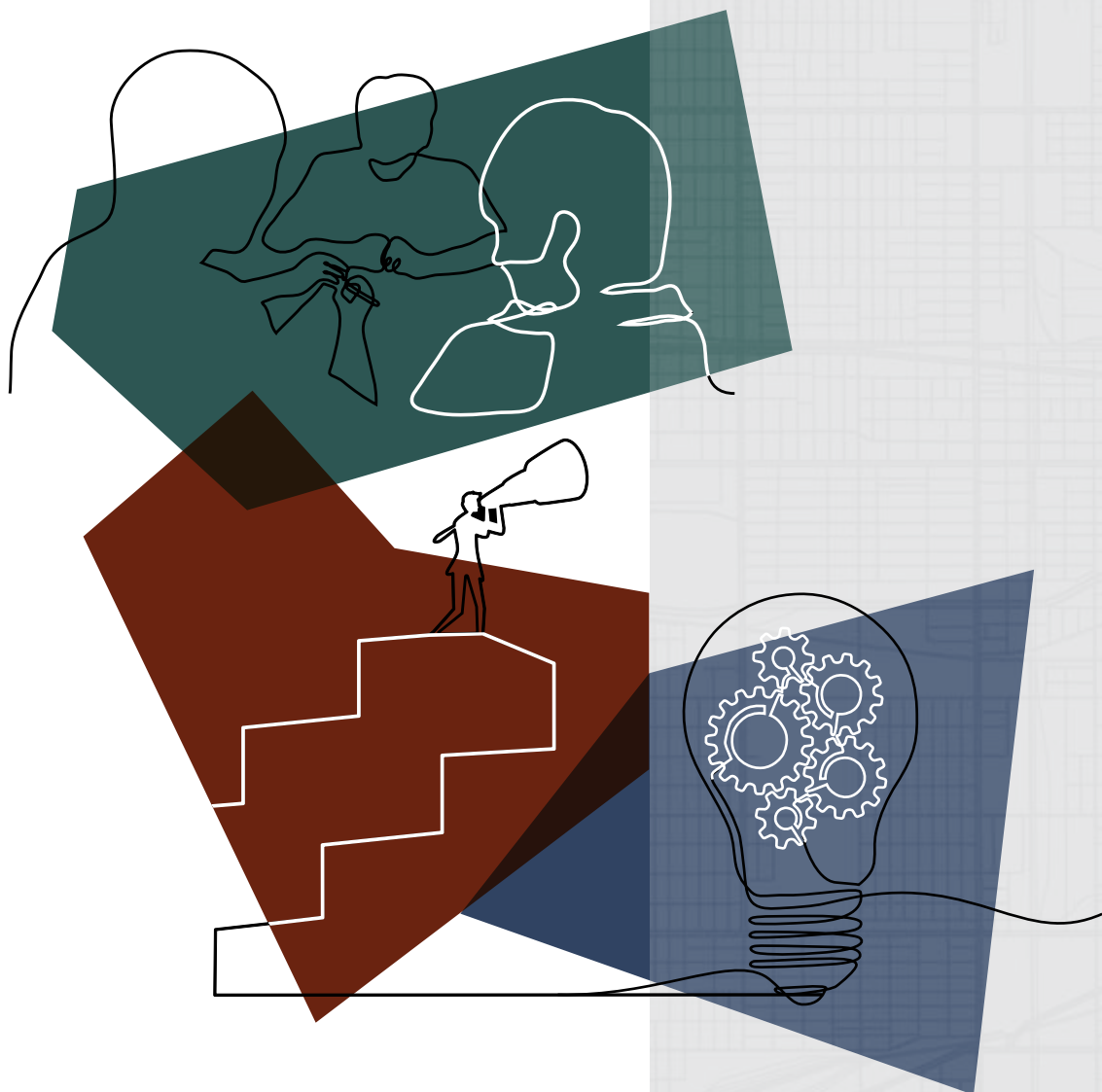


PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

PARTNERING

ADVANCING

DEVELOPING



About MPC

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) is an independent planning and policy organization working to address regional built environment issues through a racial and economic justice lens. MPC partners with communities, businesses, and government to advance policy and drive systemic change toward a more racially equitable and economically just Chicago region.


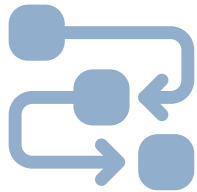
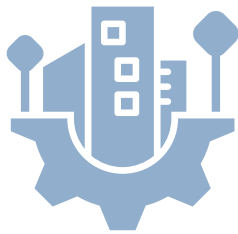







Mission

MPC transforms policies and practices to advance racial and economic justice in our communities, infrastructure, and public systems.

Vision

The Chicago region is a place where every community is valued, every person has a voice, and every neighborhood thrives.

Our body of work, projects, and initiatives encompass topics in a number of issue areas resulting in impacts to the Chicago region measured across our thematic pillars.

THEMES & ISSUE AREAS	 WATER	 PLANNING	 DEVELOPMENT
 TRANSPORTATION	 GOVERNANCE	 HOUSING	 LAND USE
IMPACT & THEMATIC PILLARS	 EQUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE	 JUST PUBLIC SYSTEMS	 THRIVING COMMUNITIES



Celebrating 90 Years Strong!

THE MPC 2024 Annual Event

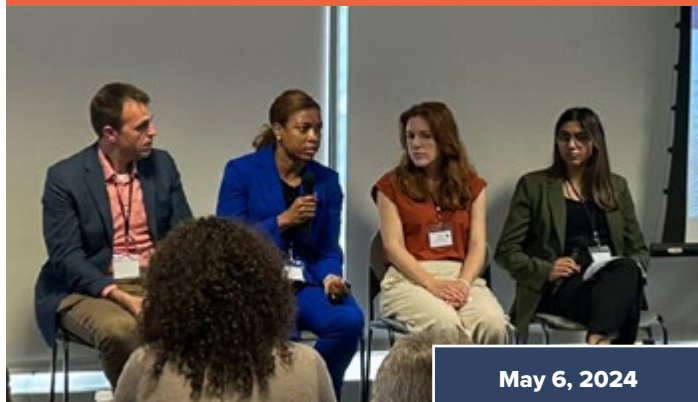
In 2024, MPC commemorated its 90th year anniversary! Since its inception in 1934 as a housing advocacy organization, MPC has been a driving force in catalyzing positive change within the built environment of the Chicago region. To mark this significant milestone, MPC held three signature events, celebrated at the 2024 MPC Annual Event, and launched its updated and redesigned brand - complete with a new website and tagline.



Our Enduring Commitment

Now, for more than nine decades, MPC has stood at the forefront of addressing some of the most pressing challenges facing our city, counties, and state. From ensuring quality and affordable housing to championing robust and reliable mass transit, safe drinking water, flood protection, healthy rivers, and resilience to a changing climate, MPC's commitment to creating a thriving, equitable Chicago region remains unwavering.

2024 Signature Events



A Vision for Water: Planning for Abundance and Scarcity in Illinois

A panel of water leaders gathered at Harold Washington College in Chicago and discussed the economic, social, and workforce challenges of the region's water sector, bringing current policy positions to shape the next decade. This framing provided the audience with key statistics and priorities that must be considered in all future planning. Attendees participated in visioning workshops to identify gaps, synergies, and priorities for future MPC work.



Untangling Zoning Impacts and Promoting Equity Through Reform

This event took place at Harold Washington Library and featured an esteemed panel of thought leaders who presented new research frameworks for analyzing land use and zoning. Following the panel discussion, working sessions with previously-engaged stakeholders explored initial research findings from MPC's Zoning and Land Use Assessment project and began a dialogue on potential future Chicago-based solutions.



Imagine Sustainable Transit: A Private Reception and 'L' Tour

This day of programming began with breakfast hosted at McDonald's Corporate Headquarters featuring comments from transit advocates State Senator Ram Villivalam and State Representative Eva Dina-Delgado. Both legislators shared their vision for the region's transit system and spoke about the opportunities to address the looming fiscal cliff. Following breakfast, attendees boarded a private chartered 'L' train to ride through the city's various neighborhoods while listening to remarks by local transit leaders about community projects.



Brand Refresh

By embedding elements of geography, maps, an updated color palette building from the previous MPC orange and pulled from the built environment, and a new tagline that boils down what we do—build equity in the built environment. In 2024, MPC refreshed its brand and continued building on the pillars established in the strategic refresh of 2023.

PARTNERING FOR PURPOSEFUL INNOVATION

Purposeful innovation starts with connection. This year, MPC expanded and deepened the partnerships that united ideas, resources, and determination. Only together, can we transform complex challenges into collective progress.



MPC Senior Director Christina Harris facilitates the discussion about capacity building in the water sector during our May 2024 event.



Our Great Rivers (Cohort Support)

Celebrating seven years of riverfront impact

Since 2016, MPC has played a vital role in advancing the Our Great Rivers vision. Starting in 2017, MPC supported 45 Chicago Community Trust (CCT) grantees across five cohorts composed of diverse civic and community partners working in neighborhoods along the Chicago, Calumet, and Des Plaines rivers. These projects have fostered new collaborations, secured and leveraged additional funding, activated riverfront sites, and made a lasting impact on Chicago's riverfronts through planning and physical improvements. In 2024, MPC concluded its cohort support with a convening that celebrated seven years of transformative work. MPC also updated the Our Great Rivers StoryMap showing the locations and project descriptions of all Our Great Rivers grant funded projects. Collectively, these projects are shaping more equitable and accessible riverfronts for all Chicagoans by reconnecting communities and their rivers.

More than 40% of the Our Great Rivers projects led to physical improvements along Chicago's rivers.

McKinley Park Development Council used their grant to develop a plan for a connected riverfront path from Ping Tom Park to the Daley Boat Launch. This plan is now being rolled into an overall South Branch Framework planning initiative led by the Department of Planning and Development.





Rivers Ecology & Governance Task Force

Partnering for a sustainable riverfront future

MPC has been a cornerstone in supporting the Our Great Rivers vision since its release in 2016. By co-convening the River Ecology and Governance Task Force with the City of Chicago and Friends of the Chicago River, MPC plays a key role in transforming Chicago's waterway system into a thriving, ecologically integrated asset. In 2024, MPC continued co-facilitating collaboration among civic, community, and government partners. The Task Force provided guidance for the Chicago Department of Transportation's River Edge Access Study, with a planning tool officially launched in late summer. The tool includes a StoryMap, to share more about the project and the tool's creation and offers valuable resources for planning projects, supporting the ongoing effort to restore and rejuvenate Chicago's rivers for future generations. Additionally, the Task Force kicked-off a new working group focused on creating a more clearly defined governance structure for riverfront assets and reviewed and provided input on new developments along the Chicago river.

As part of our advocacy work and commitment to our partners, MPC leads or supports testimony to the issues that matter.

Sustainable Development Policy

Championing a more inclusive, resilient sustainable development policy

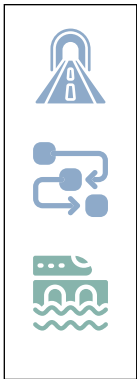
In April 2024, MPC submitted testimony in support of the City's update to the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy, a framework that encourages sustainable design in projects receiving public funding or special approvals. In a letter to the Chicago Plan Commission, MPC commended the City for expanding engagement beyond traditional stakeholders to include advocates from environmental, housing, public health, and community development sectors. MPC's input, rooted in its work co-convening the River Ecology and Governance Task Force, emphasized the importance of improving river health, expanding access to affordable housing, and advancing public health outcomes. Across all its work, MPC continues to advocate for development standards that promote equity, innovation, and climate resilience across all Chicago neighborhoods.



MPC facilitated 15 Task Force related meetings, with an average participation of 40 stakeholders at quarterly meetings.

Based on input from the Task Force, four new river-focused strategies were developed and included in the 2024 revision to the City's Sustainable Development Policy.

Our Great Rivers project teams from the last seven years celebrated their work at MPC's office in May, 2024. Attendees drew their favorite river activities, put together as a mural.



Reconnecting Communities

Reimagining infrastructure through community vision

Building on the momentum of our 2023 *Reconnecting Communities* report, MPC continued to advance community-led solutions that repair the historic harm of transportation infrastructure. In 2024, we deepened our collaboration with the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) and Design Trust Chicago (DTC), co-developing a community engagement plan focused on the viaducts in Chinatown along S. Canal St. Together, we released *A New Vision for the Canal Street Viaducts* and worked with the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and Alderwoman Nicole Lee to identify implementation pathways for quick-build projects. With direct input from residents, the project turned community priorities into rendered design concepts—bridging the gap between ideas and action. In parallel, MPC explored how to eliminate policy barriers to tactical urbanism by researching regulatory and funding models from peer cities.



MPC participated in six planning meetings with CBCAC and DTC to develop the project's community engagement plan and design process.

The DTC rendered vision of the 23rd Street viaduct shows brightly painted beams and walls, decorative lighting, bike lane balusters and a pedestrian access only section. Community residents were able to provide feedback to these and other design inspirations at the Love Letter to Chinatown open house engagement.



Homeownership Lending Partnership

Shaping a more inclusive path to homeownership

Homeownership is one of the most important vehicles for building household wealth, creating a pathway for families to increase their economic security, and passing down generational wealth. In partnership with The Chicago Community Trust (The Trust), MPC continued to advance efforts to address the homeownership gap through actionable solutions. Throughout 2024, MPC facilitated regular workshops that strengthened collaboration between community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and housing counseling agencies. These workshops provided project teams with opportunities to co-create the tools, knowledge, and networks necessary to develop innovative housing finance products with the goal of increasing access to homeownership and purchasing power for low- and moderate-income (LMI) residents of color.

MPC facilitated six workshops for the Community of Practice (CoP) of lenders and housing counselors, where MPC developed post-workshop summaries tracking participant progress on lending product development and implementation challenges.

Three project teams received renewed grants from CCT.

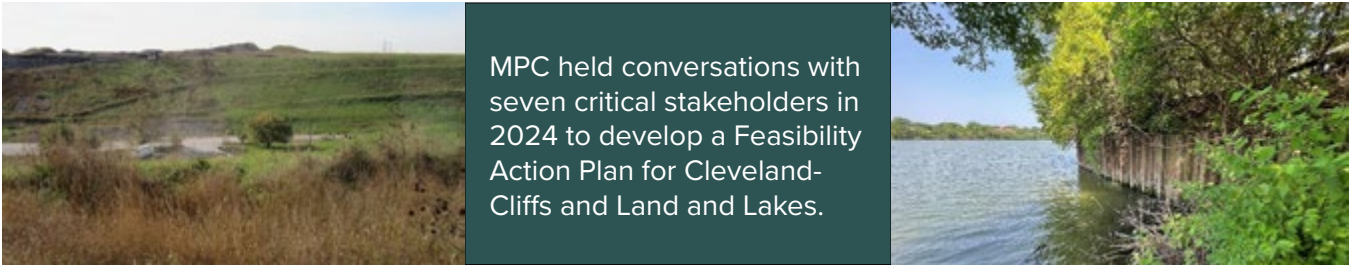


Cooperation in Calumet Region Planning

Design Guidelines & Land Use Update, Conservation Action Plan

Advancing equitable land use and environmental stewardship in the Calumet region

MPC continued its long-standing work in the Calumet region by working with several partners, including the Alliance for the Great Lakes, UIC’s Great Cities Institute, Southeast Environmental Task Force, Calumet Collaborative, and Friends of the Chicago River to help support the Department of Planning and Development’s 2024 launch of the Calumet Area Land Use and Design Guidelines Update through efforts to ensure that Calumet region residents had the information needed to fully participate in the planning process. The goal of the planning process is to establish a vision for the region that balances economic development, public health, and safety, and environmental sustainability priorities. MPC is serving as one of the working group members. Also in 2024, MPC developed site-specific feasibility framework action plans for two privately-owned industrial parcels, in collaboration with Cleveland-Cliffs and Land and Lakes. These were developed in partnership with the landowners to provide more detailed recommendations to help implement the broad restoration strategies defined in the 2022 Little Calumet Conservation Action Plan.



MPC held conversations with seven critical stakeholders in 2024 to develop a Feasibility Action Plan for Cleveland-Cliffs and Land and Lakes.



Department of Housing (DOH) Change Teams

Embedding equity through public sector partnership

MPC’s Change Teams served as a catalyst for systems change within city government by supporting public sector leaders in embedding equity into day-to-day operations through hands-on workshops, coaching, and project implementation support. In 2024, MPC deepened its partnership with the Department of Housing (DOH) to advance specific equity-based projects through facilitated workshops that focused on work planning, problem-solving, and collaboration. The Home Repair team improved their intake processes, including partnering with 311 to expand intake timelines, revising income requirements, and broadening eligibility criteria to make services more accessible. The Construction and Compliance team worked on improving equitable access for women and minority owned businesses to engage with the city’s development process, including a new informational webinar series, opportunities to take relevant free classes through Chicago Community Colleges, and a new initiative to apply for back-end administrative support to grow businesses. Concurrently, DOH’s Bureau of Community Engagement, Racial Equity, and Strategic Initiatives (CERESI) Team continued to develop practical strategies rooted in equity principles and informed by community experience. MPC helped teams refine their approaches and navigate challenges—laying the groundwork for lasting culture, process, and policy change across city departments.

MPC conducted over 6 workshops with the staff at the Department of Housing.

MPC deepened its partnership with the Department of Housing (DOH), advancing implementation of the Home Repair Team’s equity project.



ADVANCING IMPACTFUL AGENDAS THROUGH ADVOCACY

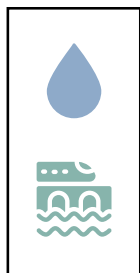
Meaningful change takes more than good ideas. It takes voices and resources united in action. By building and participating in dynamic coalitions, MPC engages in collaborative advocacy to amplify the priorities that matter most. Together, we can turn shared agendas into policies, practices, and progress that shape a better future.



Equitable Transportation-Oriented Development (ETOD) Systems Change Working Group + Scorecard

Sustaining momentum for ETOD

Building on the momentum of the Connected Communities Ordinance, MPC continued its work to ensure equitable implementation of transit-oriented development (ETOD) that advances racial equity and benefits all communities. In 2024, MPC circulated a scorecard to evaluate ETOD proposals through an equity lens, convening Elevated Chicago's project team, policy working group, and community partners to refine the tool and ensure it reflects neighborhood priorities. At the same time, MPC continued its co-leadership of Elevated Chicago's Systems Change Working Group, the city's only standing group focused exclusively on long-term ETOD policy. Through this work, MPC and its partners sharpened strategies to strengthen affordability, prevent displacement, and support housing stability near transit. Together, these efforts build the foundation for a more equitable, connected Chicago, where development works for everyone.



State of Water

Equipping leaders for a resilient water future

Across Illinois, elected officials play a vital role in ensuring communities have access to clean, safe, and affordable drinking water. Through our Drinking Water 1-2-3 Academy and technical assistance offerings, MPC has helped bridge this gap, providing local leaders with the education and tools to prioritize sustainable, equitable water decisions. During Chicago Water Week in May 2024, MPC successfully convened more than 70 water sector leaders from across the region for an energizing day titled *A Vision for Water: Planning for Abundance and Scarcity in Illinois*, facilitating field-based learning across the Calumet region. After ten years of administering and promoting the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative (CSC), MPC acted early in 2024 on an opportunity to partner with Friends of the Chicago River through the Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance (GCWA) to establish a long-term administrative home for the CSC. This opportunity, which grew out of MPC's engagement with the GCWA, was realized at a critical juncture when MPC was assessing the impact of the CSC.

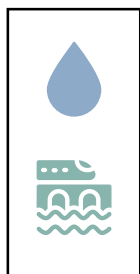
MPC partnered to host four field trip-style convenings to visit projects across the Calumet region.



The field trips brought practitioners out at various planning, design and implementation stages. They were designed to provide hands-on experience with stormwater projects applied at different regional scales, building on the goal of researching the best practices at various scales.



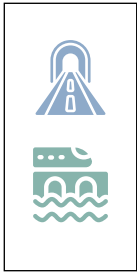
MPC leveraged its convening power to bring together a multi-generational cohort of water sector leaders under the banner of "A Vision for Water: Planning for Abundance and Scarcity in Illinois." Pictured above (L-R) Trent Foster, Chakena Perry, Emily Simonson, and Kalindi Parikh.



Lead Service Line Replacement

Building community capacity for lead-free water

Every community in Illinois deserves access to clean, safe drinking water, regardless of zip code or income. While replacing Illinois's toxic lead service lines remains one of our time's most urgent infrastructure challenges, it is also one of the greatest opportunities to invest in public health, equity, and jobs. While a 2021 state law requires all lead service lines to be replaced, many communities still lack the resources, staffing, or support they need to protect their residents, especially for Black and Latinx communities disproportionately affected by lead exposure. Throughout the year, MPC co-hosted five community workshops across Chicago, Cook County, Rockford, and Peoria to hear directly from residents about how Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) should be funded. We also convened four workforce strategy sessions with advocates and training organizations to prepare for the scale of work ahead. To better understand what local governments need, MPC interviewed mayors and utility leaders from four municipalities and developed a memo for the Environmental Defense Fund, helping shape a national Mayor's Roadmap.



Sustainable Transit Campaign

Championing sustainable funding and governance for transit's future

As the region edges closer to the impending transit fiscal cliff in 2026, MPC has intensified efforts to ensure a stable and equitable future for public transportation. In 2024, MPC played a leading role in shaping the Metropolitan Mobility Authority Act, a bold legislative proposal to modernize transit governance and secure long-term funding. Through policy briefings, blogs, and educational engagement with legislators, we worked to build momentum for sustainable solutions that reflect transit's critical role in advancing equity, climate action, and economic growth. In September, we hosted Imagine Sustainable Transit, featuring a private chartered "L" tour and reception spotlighting the value of a connected, well-funded system. By demonstrating how governance reform and long-term investment can deliver better outcomes for riders and communities, MPC continues to push for bold, collaborative solutions to preserve and strengthen our transit future. MPC remains a trusted convener and advocate, helping to shape a resilient transit system that meets the moment and moves our region forward.



Above, MPC Senior Director Audrey Wennink and Illinois State Representative Eva-Dina Delgado discuss potential outcomes of the legislation.

At right, Senate Transportation Committee Chair Ram Villivalam addresses an engaged audience at the September 2024 MPC signature event, "Imagine Sustainable Transit."

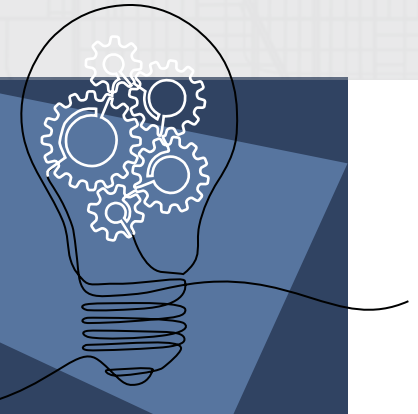


Riding the Rails in Germany

MPC joined 10 legislators and five labor leaders in December 2024 on a trip to Germany to experience regionally integrated transit systems in Berlin and Munich and discuss how this could inform legislation efforts in Illinois.

DEVELOPING SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES FOR POLICY CHANGE

Effective policy change starts with solid groundwork. In partnership, MPC sets the groundwork for impact by identifying gaps, collecting critical input, building capacity, and aligning efforts for greater reach and deeper impact. This practical, coordinated approach allows MPC to advance solutions that not only address root causes, but also create a foundation for enduring progress.



During the July 2024 MPC zoning event, working groups explored initial research findings from our Zoning and Land Use Assessment project, starting a dialogue on potential future Chicago-based solutions.



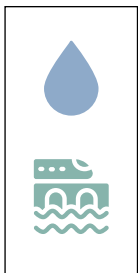
Architectural Technical Standards Manual (ATSM) Updates

Modernizing affordable housing design standards

In partnership with the Chicago Department of Housing, MPC is supporting an update to the City's Architectural Technical Standards Manual (ATSM), which governs design, construction, and contracting for all City-funded multifamily affordable housing developments. Last updated in 2023, the goal of the ATSM is to ensure high-quality housing design, protect resident well-being, and support equitable and competitive construction practices. As part of the Cut the Tape initiative, this update addresses longstanding feedback from developers, architects, and contractors to streamline processes while maintaining strong standards. In 2024, MPC conducted research, including interviewing agency staff in peer municipalities and reviewing related guides and documents, and co-facilitated monthly Steering Committee meetings. A draft of the updated manual is expected in 2025 that reflects broad input, prioritizes equity, and supports the production of high-quality, affordable housing across Chicago.

Six Steering Committee meetings were hosted in 2024 across a range of topics from investigating change orders to three-bid requirements to individual design standards that are part of the ATSM.

The Steering Committee includes 16 regular members as well as rotating staff from DOH and the Mayor's Office.



Right Infrastructure, Right Place

Building sustainability through green infrastructure investment for the greatest strategic impact

As climate change accelerates, vulnerable communities in Chicago and the region continue to bear the brunt of urban flooding and heat stress. In 2024 MPC launched Right Infrastructure, Right Place (RIRP), a community-scale, data-driven prioritization tool designed to guide equitable, climate-resilient green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) investments across Chicago and Cook County. Informed by a national scan of emerging practices—including advances in climate modeling, data analytics, and triple-bottom line valuation methods—and by newly available data from local stormwater agencies, this methodology is being developed to help decision-makers direct stormwater investments where the need and potential for impact are greatest—laying the groundwork for a more just approach to green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) investment. The initiative extends MPC's StormStore™ partnership with The Nature Conservancy, whose regional storm-water credit market was just renewed by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District through 2025. Together, RIRP and StormStore™ position MPC to channel future GSI investments toward the communities most vulnerable to flooding and heat—building a smarter, more resilient Chicago.

RIRP is now piloting with Blacks in Green and Emerald South Collaborative in the City of Chicago, and the City of Calumet City in south-suburban Cook County. Case studies from our Chicago-based partners are being applied at multiple spatial scales to validate and refine RIRP's assumptions before broader rollout. These case studies also build a stronger investment case for GSI within the plans, aligned with actual capacity limitations in local sewers. The City of Chicago's Green Stormwater Infrastructure Strategy and Plan update, scheduled for release by the end of 2025, will include case studies.

MPC is positioned to help turn data into equity-focused, climate-resilient solutions for high-need blocks

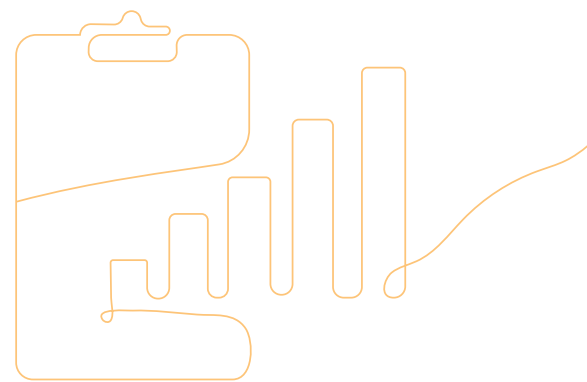
Two neighborhood case studies—Sustainable Square Mile (Blacks in Green) and Terra Firma (Emerald South)—will be folded into Chicago's updated GSI Strategy.



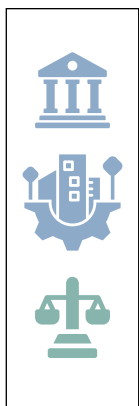
Zoning & Land Use Assessment

Zoning for equity and opportunity

Zoning supports how land is used and developed. It shapes the way people live, work, and move through their neighborhoods. MPC continued advancing its Citywide Zoning and Land Use Assessment in partnership with the Urban Institute and a dedicated Steering Committee and Community Advisory Group. Through collaborative research and stakeholder engagement, MPC examined how zoning influences three neighborhood outcomes—limited pollution exposure, affordable housing, and strong business corridors. Over the year, MPC convened stakeholders to review research and outline a zoning and land use toolkit, hosted an event featuring a panel of national experts with more than 200 attendees, and deepened engagement with City Council members to understand how they approach zoning and development in their wards. By evaluating the historic and current impacts of zoning on health, equity, and sustainability, creating recommendations, and implementing reforms, this project supports creating more livable and vibrant Chicago.



MPC staff presented initial research findings to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and hosted a virtual gathering of Alderperson staff from approximately 10 ward offices.



Cut the Tape

Advancing development reform for a more equitable Chicago

MPC has worked across multiple projects to identify barriers within Chicago's development system, particularly those impacting equity and efficiency. Our findings from supporting We Rise Together grantees, small developers and small business owners on the South and West side, combined with data and reflections from interviews with practitioners, architects, business owners, and developers collected as part of our Citywide Zoning and Land Use Assessment, positioned us to contribute meaningfully to the Mayor's Cut the Tape initiative. Throughout 2024, MPC played a key role in launching Cut the Tape by providing data analysis on permitting and cases before the City's Zoning Board of Appeals as well as participating in roundtables to understand Chicago's challenges and potential solutions. MPC is a co-chair of the Cut the Tape Task Force, helping to structure and host meetings, facilitate discussions of the 50-member Task Force, and define metrics to track the success of the initiative. Together with partners across the public and private sectors, we are helping to build a development process that is faster, fairer, and better positioned to meet the city's urgent affordable housing and small business development needs.

The City has been chipping away at the 100+ recommendations in the *Cut the Tape* report, with around 90% of them being in progress as of 2025.



Housing and Economic Development Bond

Advancing equitable development through new public investment tools

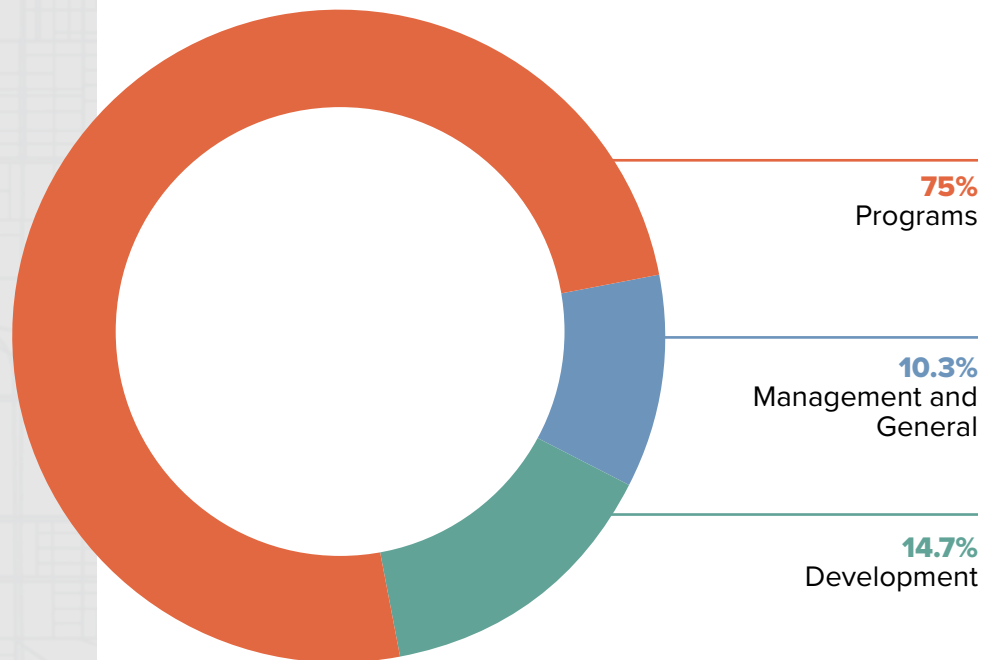
The Housing and Economic Development Bond, passed in April 2024, marked a shift in how Chicago funds housing and community development, moving beyond Tax Increment Financing to generate new, flexible resources for equitable investment. MPC's earlier Equitable Financial Incentives project argued for the need to center equity in the allocation of funds. In 2024, MPC testified in subject matter hearings and at the Chicago City Council Committee on Finance in support of the bond, uplifting its potential to prioritize disinvested communities and improve transparency. Already, bond proceeds are being put to work. In North Lawndale, they're supporting the Missing Middle Housing Initiative to revitalize vacant City-owned lots and expand homeownership. In West Englewood, they're helping grow the Wood Street Farm, an urban agriculture and workforce development hub. The bond also set aside \$135 million to launch Green Social Housing, a public-private model to deliver permanently affordable, environmentally sustainable homes. The Green Social Housing ordinance to establish a nonprofit entity to administer this program was approved by City Council in 2025.



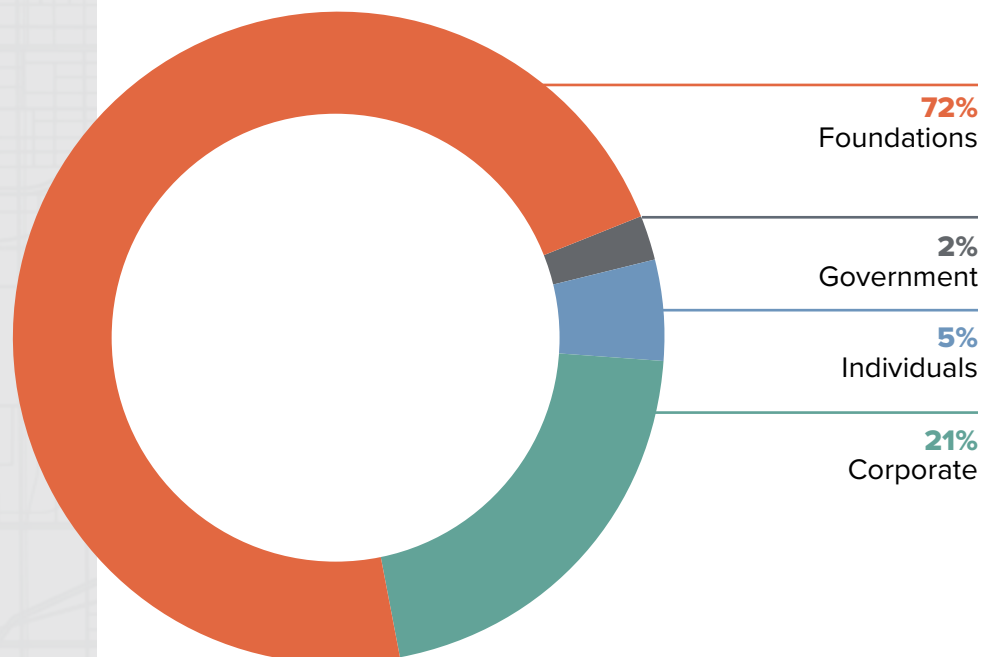
Financial Summary

MPC is able to advance its mission of creating a more equitable and sustainable Chicago region thanks to the generous contributions of individuals, corporations, foundations, and government. By directly funding MPC's work, these valued partners enable us to focus on ensuring that everyone in the region has access to the resources and opportunities they need to thrive.

FY'24 Operating Expenses by Category



FY'24 Operating Revenue by Source



Donors

We are deeply grateful for the valued contributions we received throughout the year from our many supporters. These contributions have made a meaningful difference as they have enabled us to continue our work toward creating a more equitable and just Chicago region.

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\$250,000–\$499,999

The Joyce Foundation

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\$100,000–\$249,999

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