

## **Keepers & Seekers: The Next Mayor's Priorities for a Prosperous Metropolitan Region**

Since 1934, the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) has been dedicated to shaping a more sustainable and prosperous greater Chicago region. As an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, MPC serves communities and residents by developing, promoting and implementing solutions for sound regional growth.

MPC believes a healthy, prosperous region – and its core city -- is competitive, equitable and sustainable. In the fall of 2010, we compiled a list of economic development, infrastructure and housing-related challenges the next mayor will face in achieving this goal. The following briefing book provides references and resources to help all of the mayoral candidates develop positions and policies around these issues. We have broken them down to two categories: the **Keepers** are current programs and initiatives led by the City of Chicago that should continue or be expanded; the **Seekers** are initiatives, programs and activities that need nurturing and increased support from the city to succeed.

Underlying everything on these lists is the most important and most difficult challenge every elected official is facing today and for the foreseeable future: historic budget deficits. Chicago's is more than \$650 million, while Illinois is about \$13 billion in the red. It will be imperative for the next mayor to consider privatization of assets, service cuts, tax increases, and – above all – more efficient and strategic allocation of limited resources.

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# **Keepers**

## **Regional decision-making and collaboration**

**Why it matters:** Mayoral vision and leadership will be essential to seizing our potential as a competitive region. Chicago is the core of a large, symbiotic metropolitan region that benefits both the city and suburbs through efforts such as the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and Regional Transportation Authority. Continued leadership of the Mayors Caucus and participation in CMAP will help Chicago's mayor unlock political support and funding for city priorities.

### **GO TO 2040**

**The Urgency of Long-Range Planning:** Most of our region's near-term challenges are the direct result of choices made — or too often deferred — in the past. Urgent challenges have often been an excuse to avoid planning, but they actually reinforce the need to plan more effectively. We need to act now, before today's opportunities become tomorrow's crises.

During decades of rapid but largely uncoordinated expansion, the region grew in patterns that were not sustainable. New homes cropped up in areas that were difficult to reach by automobile and virtually impossible by public transit. Jobs created were often far from the region's residential centers, [or in areas not affordable to local workers,] keeping commuters tied up in traffic and wasting billions of dollars in lost time and fuel. Patterns of development consumed land at a rapid rate, with serious implications for natural resources — including less open space, potential [ground]water shortages, and diminished air quality. Now is our best chance to begin reversing long-range trends like these, which are barriers to the prosperity and livability of this region and its communities.

**Communities Collaborating for Success:** While the region is prosperous by many measures, sustaining residents' quality of life depends on our ability to address these problems. GO TO 2040's main purpose is to grow our region's economy by building on its strengths and overcoming its challenges. The plan articulates policy reforms that are carefully targeted to enhance the region's economy by setting clear priorities, including improved efficiency of investments and transparency of public decision making. Within local control over zoning and land decisions, communities have many opportunities to work both together and independently toward the common goal of sustainable prosperity.

GO TO 2040 calls for investment in existing communities and emphasizes development that is more compact and "livable." By implementing GO TO 2040, residents will have more options for getting around, more options for housing, more jobs nearer to where they live, more parks and open space, more plentiful and cleaner water, healthier air, and better quality of life.

**GO TO 2040 is about sustainable prosperity:** The plan seeks to maintain and strengthen our region's position as one of the nation's few global economic centers. Prosperity is driven largely by a combination of infrastructure, overall business environment, workforce, and amenities. To remain an attractive place for workers and businesses, our region needs:

- Global connections that link us to international trade and information networks, providing economic opportunities and a broad range of jobs.
- A robust, diverse business community, skilled labor force, and excellent higher education system.
- Modern, well-maintained infrastructure, including transportation, energy, telecommunications, and water.
- A healthy environment with ample open space and parks for recreation.
- Active institutions for arts and culture, along with other amenities for a high overall quality of life.
- Government that is transparent and highly accountable.

**How MPC can help:** MPC is providing direct technical assistance to help communities recognize and unleash the benefits of working together, across governmental borders (including Northwest Indiana), to tackle shared growth challenges. Several early local successes from interjurisdictional collaborations are already leveraging competitive federal resources and inspiring others across the region and country, as well as demonstrating the efficiency and effectiveness of this approach. Our goals include building local capacity and community engagement to inform decision-making, smarter spending strategies, new models of public and private investment, and expanded access to quality housing near jobs and transit.

**MPC Resources:**

[Community Building Initiative](#)

**References:**

[www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/main](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/2040/main)

[www.mayorscaucus.org](http://www.mayorscaucus.org)

## Chicago Climate Action Plan

**Why it matters:** Chicago's Climate Action Plan has been heralded as one of the most thorough and rigorous in the country. The next mayor must harness the momentum of the numerous activities currently underway, and keep them on track. MPC is particularly enthusiastic about ramping up partnerships with employers to reward those who reduce the number of people driving solo to work.

### Chicago Climate Action Plan: Improved Transportation Options

Every day, Chicagoans travel to a variety of places – they commute to work, drive to the store, go to the doctor, make a trip to the health club, go out for dinner. Currently 21 percent of the city's greenhouse gas emissions are produced by cars, trucks, buses and trains. (This inventory excludes emissions from air travel, an approach that mirrors that of most other cities.) To lower emissions, a high-quality transportation system must include a mix of public transit, bicycling, walking, car sharing, energy-efficient vehicles and the development of transit-oriented neighborhoods. Chicagoans have many places to go, and they need a variety of convenient, energy-efficient ways to get there.

#### **MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

- 1. Invest more in transit:** Invest in transit improvements and boost Chicago's transit system ridership by 30 percent = .83 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 2. Expand Transit Incentives:** Provide incentives for transit use, such as pre-tax transit passes = .03 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 3. Promote Transit-Oriented Development:** Encourage development focused on public transit, walking and bicycle use = .63 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 4. Make Walking and Bicycling Easier:** Increase the number of walking and biking trips to one million a year = .01 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 5. Car Share and Carpool:** Boost car sharing, carpooling and vanpooling = .5 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 6. Improve Fleet Efficiency:** Improve the energy efficiency of fleets in Chicago, including buses, taxis and delivery vehicles = .21 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 7. Achieve Higher Fuel Efficiency Standards:** Advocate for the implementation of higher federal fuel efficiency standards = .51 MMTCO<sub>2</sub> reduction\*
- 8. Switch to Cleaner Fuels:** Increase the supply and use of sustainable alternative fuels to Chicago vehicles = .68 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*
- 9. Support Intercity Rail:** Support intercity high-speed passenger rail plan
- 10. Improve Freight Movement:** Faster, more efficient freight movement, including support for CREATE = 1.61 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction\*

*\*MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e (million metric tons carbon dioxide equivalent) is the term for the quantity of any greenhouse gas, including carbon dioxide, methane and others, translated CO<sub>2</sub> by weighing it by its relative global warming potential. A reduction of 1 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e is equivalent to removing nearly 185,000 cars from the road.*

**How MPC can help:** MPC is currently engaged in two initiatives that advance the first two strategies outlined in the Climate Action Plan's Transportation Report: Invest more in transit; and expand Transit Incentives.

In 2011, MPC will release a citywide analysis that identifies 10 Bus Rapid Transit routes that meet the following criteria:

- feasible to construct;
- consistent with livability goals;
- access to schools, jobs and parks; and
- potential for adjacent transit-oriented development.

As the Chicago Transit Authority's partner on a BRT study of a Western corridor, MPC will ensure an open public process to pursue one of the highest-ranked routes. MPC also will continue to advocate for the implementation of a robust network of BRT routes in Chicago and its suburbs to complement the existing rapid transit network.

Reconnecting Neighborhoods, a community planning initiative MPC led around three Chicago Housing Authority Plan for Transformation mixed-income neighborhoods, is focusing on three specific recommendations to improve transit access. They are the city's South Lakefront Study, a focused Bronzeville Retail corridor strategy, and station-area planning around Green Line station at Damen Avenue and Lake Street.

Also in 2011, MPC will conduct a pilot on behalf of the Chicago Climate Action Plan to recruit 10 to 15 employers to adopt comprehensive Employer-Assisted Housing and other Commute Trip Reduction strategies. MPC will measure how much these actions reduce an employer's carbon footprint, recruitment and retention expenses, and employees' housing and transportation costs, and use findings to recruit additional employers.

**MPC Resources:**

[Bus Rapid Transit](#)

[BRT Report Synopsis](#)

[Reconnecting Neighborhoods](#)

[Employer-Assisted Housing](#)

**References:**

[www.chicagoclimateaction.org/](http://www.chicagoclimateaction.org/)

[www.fta.dot.gov/assistance/technology/research\\_4240.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/assistance/technology/research_4240.html)

[www.cmap.illinois.gov/strategy-papers/transportation-demand-management](http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/strategy-papers/transportation-demand-management)

[www.transitchicago.com/](http://www.transitchicago.com/)

## Central Area Action Plan

**Why it matters:** A little over a year ago, Chicago updated its 2003 blueprint, the Central Area Plan, with cost estimates and timelines for transformative transportation, open space and waterfront projects that will be critical to the city's economic expansion. This Central Area Action plan builds off the initial plan to bring the recommendations to reality. The West Loop Transportation Center is a key piece of the plan, and should be a top investment priority.

### Central Area Action Plan: West Loop Transportation Center

Four-level intermodal transfer center in the West Loop (located beneath Clinton) would connect commuter/intercity rail, CTA rapid transit and Central Area transitways.

**Implementation Goal:** Complete by 2016

**Next Steps:**

Protect right-of-way for space

Work with transit partners (CTA, Metra, Amtrak) to establish time lines for service

**Implementation Considerations:**

Implementation may need to occur in numerous phases, as individual services are added

Project success will depend upon project progress from transit operators

**Potential Funding Sources:** FTA New Starts, State bonds, TIF

**City Role:** Project Lead

**Cost Estimate:** \$2,000,000,000

**How MPC can help:** MPC is supporting the City of Chicago in planning for the location of a new High Speed Rail station in downtown Chicago by convening and managing the Civic Advisory Committee. The CAC will address the station's impact on the goals of the Central Area Plan, including expansion of the commercial, residential, and retail sectors, Placemaking, and sound urban design around the station. MPC's goals include incorporation of green infrastructure, improved access to quality transit, creation of more walkable/bikeable communities, and the improvement and expansion of transit to reduce auto use.

**MPC Resources:**

[Transit Innovation](#)

[Placemaking Chicago](#)

**References:**

[www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/central\\_area\\_action\\_plan.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/dcd/supp_info/central_area_action_plan.html)

[www.placemakingchicago.com/](http://www.placemakingchicago.com/)

## Water metering

**Why it matters:** The city can't manage what it can't measure; today it has approximately 325,000 single-family homes and two-flats that don't have water meters. The city's existing metering program is voluntary, and needs to be ratcheted up to include every home in Chicago.

### The Math on Meters

Let's say a goal were to install 50 percent of the "missing" meters in one mayoral term. It costs approximately \$600 to install one water meter, including parts and labor.

At \$600 per meter, installing 50 percent of the missing meters on single-family and two-flat homes ( $327,000/2 = 163,500$ ), would cost \$98 million dollars. This is obviously a huge amount of money, approximately \$24.5 million a year for four years.

However, this investment would reduce water loss by about 15 million gallons a day, 5.475 billion gallons a year (22 billion over a four-year term), as well as the energy cost and resulting emissions of pumping all that.

An investment of \$24.5 million a year to save 5.475 billion gallons comes out to \$1 for every 225 gallons. (For comparison, current water rates are \$1 for 500 gallons). If calculated by Chicago's population (2.85 million), it's \$8.60 per person per year to save 2,016 gallons of water per person per year. That's approximately 20 days of water consumption for the average Chicago resident.

**How MPC can help:** In 2011, MPC will pursue three concurrent, cornerstone water policy projects. Over multiple years, these projects will ultimately contribute to a more sustainable regional water supply, expanded use of green infrastructure and technology, and the institution of demand-management pricing for water. One of them – to revise criteria guiding \$450 million state revolving loan funds for water – supports expanded metering in Chicago. As part of a state working group, MPC will promote adoption by officials in the Ill. Environmental Protection Agency of new criteria that will prioritize and invest in fix-it-first investments, conservation measures, and full-cost pricing.

### MPC Resources:

[Water Supply Planning](#)

### References:

[www.metersave.org/](http://www.metersave.org/)

[www.chicagolandh2o.org](http://www.chicagolandh2o.org)

## First-ever pedestrian plan

**Why it matters:** The Chicago Dept. of Transportation is in the midst of drafting a strategy, advised by the Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Council, to ensure streets are safe for all users, including pedestrians, a vital ingredient of vibrant and livable neighborhoods. The new mayor must continue to support it and similar efforts, such as enforcing the Pedestrian Safety Act, which requires Illinois drivers to stop, not just yield, to pedestrians at a crosswalk.

One of Chicago's greatest assets is its vibrant and walkable streets. In downtown and many neighborhoods, the pedestrian environment has helped to sustain the economy and produced important public health benefits by encouraging people to get out of their cars. The purpose of Chicago's Pedestrian Plan is to build on our existing strengths to make our streets safer, more fun and interesting for residents and visitors. This includes well-kept sidewalks, strong commercial districts, safe and visible crossing areas for cars, bikes and pedestrians, and many other strategies that will support more pedestrian activity in the city.

Major tasks for Chicago's Pedestrian Plan:

- Creating a Vision Statement and Chicago's Pedestrian Philosophy
- Developing a comprehensive system of pedestrian policies
- Establishing a citywide prioritization system for implementation of pedestrian policies
- Identifying funding sources and developing funding programs
- Leading the public outreach process

Intended outcomes of the Pedestrian Plan:

- Save lives
- Improve physical health
- Support transit, reduce traffic congestion
- Contribute to sustainability, reduce pollution
- Create a sense of place
- Stimulate economy
- Promote social interaction

**How MPC can help:** CDOT, which contracted with Sam Schwartz Engineering to develop the pedestrian plan, launched its process in November 2010. MPC serves on the Mayor's Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and will work to connect the pedestrian plan to transit, BRT, economic development, and other related opportunities.

### MPC Resources:

[Placemaking Chicago](#)

### References:

[www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/supp\\_info/mayor\\_s\\_pedestrianadvisorycouncil.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/supp_info/mayor_s_pedestrianadvisorycouncil.html)

[www.samschwartz.com/Home.aspx](http://www.samschwartz.com/Home.aspx)

[www.metroplanning.org/multimedia/publication/384](http://www.metroplanning.org/multimedia/publication/384)

[www.placemakingchicago.com/](http://www.placemakingchicago.com/)



## O'Hare Modernization Plan

**Why it matters:** The airport is essential to every economic sector's growth. Chicago's next mayor will need to complete the runway realignment and pay comparable attention to western access and bypass and improved transit connections to the airport.

### About the O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP)

**Overview:** The O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) will reconfigure O'Hare International Airport's intersecting runways into a more modern, parallel layout. The \$6.6 billion Program will substantially reduce delays in all weather conditions and increase capacity at the airfield, allowing O'Hare to meet the region's aviation needs well into the future.

The OMP will also bring a new western terminal facility with more airline gates and parking. The western terminal will be connected to O'Hare's main terminal core by an automated people mover system.

**Economic Benefits:** O'Hare already generates 450,000 jobs and \$38 billion in economic activity for the Chicago region and State of Illinois. A modernized O'Hare means the creation of 195,000 more jobs, and another \$18 billion in annual economic activity. The OMP is expected to save the airlines approximately \$370 million and passengers \$380 million a year.

**Land Acquisition:** The O'Hare Modernization Program will need to acquire a total of 433 acres in Chicago, Des Plaines, Elk Grove Village, and the Village of Bensenville. The O'Hare Land Acquisition Program operates under the guidelines of the federal Uniform Relocation and Real Properties Act.

**Funding:** The OMP protects taxpayers. No local or state taxpayer dollars will be used to fund the Program. Funding comes from a variety of sources: Passenger Facility Charges, General Airport Revenue Bonds, and federal Airport Improvement Program funds.

**O'Hare Modernization Act:** On August 6, 2003 Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich signed the O'Hare Modernization Act (OMA) into law. The law recognizes the importance of a modernized O'Hare to Illinois businesses, jobs, and transportation.

The O'Hare Modernization Act received overwhelming bi-partisan support in the Illinois General Assembly. It ensures modernization efforts move forward as efficiently as possible, consistent with Federal safety and environmental reviews. The Act recognizes that thorough Federal reviews will assure safety, efficiency, and consistency with the national air transportation system.

**How MPC can help:** While MPC has followed the lead on the modernization plan of other groups such as the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce and Civic Committee, it is advocating for the Elgin-O'Hare Extension/O'Hare Bypass to improve western access to the airport. The project has been widely supported for many years due to its more direct connection to O'Hare and beyond, as well as its potential to improve freight movement and support business development around the airport. In addition, the construction, maintenance and management of the road would create jobs and expand travel choices for Illinois residents.

To support innovative financing of major transportation projects such as the Elgin-O'Hare western access/bypass, CREATE rail freight modernization plan, and an express train to O'Hare, MPC will work with the Governor's Office, Ill. Dept. of Transportation, and Illinois General Assembly to enact authorizing legislation for Public-Private Partnerships modeled on best practices from around the country and globe.

MPC currently serves on Gov. Quinn's Elgin-O'Hare West Bypass Advisory Council, which is recommending an implementation, financing and operating structure for the infrastructure improvements surrounding and supporting O'Hare International Airport; including the extension of the existing Elgin-O'Hare Expressway and a new West Bypass. The council also will explore viable funding options for a new complementary public transit network to maximize economic opportunities for the region, support diversity, and incorporate sustainable practices and planning.

**MPC Resources:**

[Transportation Investment  
Public-Private Partnerships](#)

**References:**

[www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doa/provdrs/omp.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/doa/provdrs/omp.html)  
[www.metroplanning.org/multimedia/publication/388](http://www.metroplanning.org/multimedia/publication/388)  
[www.elginohare-westbypass.org/SitePages/Home.aspx](http://www.elginohare-westbypass.org/SitePages/Home.aspx)

## CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program)

**Why it matters:** This ambitious freight rail plan is another essential tool for economic growth. The current plan concentrates on fixing the existing network, but the new mayor needs to champion a next-generation plan to attract jobs by expanding intermodal capacity in the city and suburbs.

### Public Benefits of CREATE

#### **Stronger Regional and National Economies**

Regionally and nationally, CREATE will spark job growth and help businesses become more efficient and competitive.

- In all, CREATE will bring public benefits to the Chicago region valued at:
  - \$595 million related to motorists, rail passengers and safety
  - \$1.1 billion related to air quality improvements
  - \$2.2 billion related to construction
- During its construction period, CREATE will generate an annual average of
  - More than 2,700 full-time construction-related jobs
  - \$365 million in purchases of materials and services
- By decreasing shipping times, CREATE will boost the competitiveness of manufacturers and businesses and encourage long-term job growth in Illinois and nationwide. Shippers will save an estimated \$40 million annually in reduced inventory costs.
- Reductions in highway needs and user costs will yield more than \$10 billion in savings for the nation over 20 years.

#### **A Better Quality of Life For Northeastern Illinois**

Regionally, CREATE will enhance passenger rail service, reduce motorist delays, increase public safety, improve air quality and create jobs.

- New overpasses, underpasses and other improvements will reduce the time Chicago-area motorists spend waiting at railroad crossings by an average 3,000 hours a day.
- Accidents and injuries at 25 existing grade crossings will be eliminated.
- Police and fire emergency vehicle routes will be improved in neighborhoods with new overpasses or underpasses.
- Travel times for Metra commuters will improve and schedules will become more reliable.
- Capacity on Metra's SouthWest and Heritage lines will increase. CREATE also will permit the increased use of LaSalle Street Station, freeing capacity at Union Station.
- Emissions from cars, trucks and locomotives will be greatly reduced, improving air quality.
- Noise from idling or slow-moving trains will be reduced in residential neighborhoods.
- Green space will be restored along the lakefront.

**How MPC can help:** In 2000, hosted "Moving Goods from Here to There," a groundbreaking day-long conference on the issue of freight transportation in the region for a diverse group of stakeholders. In 2002, MPC published *Critical Cargo: A Regional*

*Freight Action Agenda*, which made three near-term recommendations to improve freight activity in the region and helped shape what became CREATE. Not surprisingly, MPC is a strong proponent of CREATE, advocated for federal dollars on its behalf (in 2010, CREATE received a \$133 million ARRA grant and \$2.8 million in TIGER II funds from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation), and supported its inclusion in the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's *GO TO 2040* plan as a top investment priority.

Freight trains use the same tracks as Metra and Amtrak, so CREATE will have significant impact on passenger rail service, such as eliminating train conflicts at several locations on the south side of Chicago and grade separations along south and east Amtrak corridors.

CREATE also is essential to enabling high speed rail (HSR) in the Midwest. Five of the seven HSR corridors designated by the Federal Railroad Administration and all of the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative's designated corridors benefit from CREATE projects.

**MPC Resources:**

[Transit Innovation](#)

**References:**

[www.createprogram.org/](http://www.createprogram.org/)

## Affordable and workforce housing

**Why it matters:** Mayor Daley's personal leadership on housing issues has been significant. He championed the city's Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) partnership with MPC, for example, which has helped hundreds live near work. He reinvested in Chicago neighborhoods, leveraged new private sector resources, and attracted national attention and replication. With federal resources more focused on livable, pedestrian friendly communities, Mayor Daley's successor can attract funds to ramp up this activity.

### [City of Chicago Five-Year Affordable Housing Plan, 2009-2013](#)

With guidance from the advisory group and other members of the public, the Department of Housing has developed a plan that is forward-looking, compassionate and realistic. It embodies several principles that, we believe, are shared by most Chicagoans:

- Chicago should continue to be a city of strong affordable neighborhoods, with good housing, schools, parks, libraries and shopping districts.
- Affordable housing is an asset to every neighborhood and to the city as a whole. It helps ensure that Chicago continues to be home to people of many different ages, incomes and backgrounds.
- Affordable housing helps build healthy neighborhoods. It creates a market for new retail stores, restaurants and other neighborhood amenities. Conversely, when City government brings public improvements to a neighborhood, the existing housing becomes more attractive to low and moderate income families.
- Affordable housing is good for the economy of the entire city. When housing costs are minimized, low and moderate income families have more money to spend on other items, including education, the passport to a better life for their children. Affordable housing also creates jobs in construction, building management and other industries.
- Affordability means more than just the size of the rent or mortgage payment. A home is more affordable when it uses less energy, when it is less expensive to build and operate, when taxes are reasonable and when nearby mass transit makes driving unnecessary [thereby reducing travel costs].
- Government support is necessary to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing in Chicago. Government's role should be to work in partnership with the private and not-for-profit sectors.
- While homeownership has many positive effects on a city, it is not for everyone. The most critical need in Chicago is for affordable rental housing for those at the lower end of the economic spectrum.
- Supportive housing must remain a high priority. Many Chicagoans need social services in addition to housing, to help them turn their lives around.
- The Department should continue to direct the majority of resources toward the neediest individuals and families.
- We will need to be flexible, creative and open to new ideas.

The Five-Year Affordable Housing Plan for 2009-2013 calls for investing \$2 billion to assist 50,000 housing units. This is a modest increase over the 2004-2008 Plan but a realistic one in the current economic climate. If the economy improves more rapidly than economists now expect, the City will respond appropriately to new opportunities that might arise. We will use every tool at our disposal. At a time of limited resources, we must invest more wisely and strategically than ever before.

**How MPC can help:** When “inclusionary housing” was a divisive and controversial topic, pitting housing advocates against the city and the private sector development community, MPC quietly met with Homebuilders to discuss their self-interest in housing a competitive workforce and ensuring the local housing stock is affordable to the local workforce. For more than a year, we explored incentives, cost offsets and development budgets that could advance our common goals. Ultimately, MPC suggested a formula the city could use to encourage developers to require or encourage a portion of new housing developments be set aside for low and moderate income workers. The city used that proposal to inform the latest version of the Affordability Residents Ordinance, which requires any developer using city land, financing or zoning variances, to provide 10-20 percent affordable housing. MPC served on the advisory committee for the city’s Affordable Housing Plan, and remains committed to helping craft housing policies that leverage private sector expertise and investment to advance public sector goals.

In addition to the EAH-commuter pilot on behalf of the city’s Climate Action Plan, MPC will continue to recruit businesses throughout the region to provide EAH programs and become advocates for affordable housing incentives in Illinois and the nation. For example, to supplement the tax credit and matching funds available through the State of Illinois, MPC will join others in advocating for either administrative or legislated federal EAH incentives. Locally, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has invited MPC to administer \$450,000 in federal energy efficiency incentives to EAH buyers and renters, a potentially replicable model.

**MPC Resources:**

[Employer-Assisted Housing](#)

**References:**

[www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/progs/affordchic.html](http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/progs/affordchic.html)

[www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/supp\\_info/housing/AROdevelopersguide.pdf](http://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/dcd/supp_info/housing/AROdevelopersguide.pdf)

[www.reachillinois.org](http://www.reachillinois.org)

## Chicago Housing Authority Plan for Transformation

**Why it matters:** Partly a victim of the recession and partly due to a lack of coordinated investments in nearby transit and retail, the first CHA mixed-income communities are a vast improvement over the isolated high rises of the past, but are not yet achieving their full potential. New initiatives are capitalizing on the down economy, bringing smaller properties into the mixed-income portfolio with new private sector partnerships. All eyes are on Chicago to see if this huge undertaking – the largest and most ambitious redevelopment of public housing in history – can be a model for the nation.

### 2010 Landmark Year for CHA Plan for Transformation

Since the Plan's launch in 1999, CHA has invested more than \$3 billion in public and private resources and completed 74 percent of housing under the goal.

The Plan for Transformation is guided by the basic belief that all residents should have the same opportunity to share in Chicago's promise, break the cycle of poverty and rebuild lives. Not only does the Plan call for the demolition of high-rise structures that were in disrepair and had become havens for criminal activity, CHA is also offering its residents training in life skills that will assist them as they move into mixed-income communities and continue to be productive members of society.

In 2010, CHA shuttered the last family housing high-rise. In mid-December, the last tenant moved out of 1230 N. Burling, in the Cabrini-Green Homes. Since 1996, due to rulings of insufficiency by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 23 high-rise dwellings have been shut down and demolished at Cabrini. CHA has begun replacing the development with mixed-income apartments and condominiums in three-flat and mid-rise buildings.

Also in Dec. 2010, CHA announced the completion of all handicap-accessible senior units, and the 98 percent completion of all 9,382 senior-designated housing units promised under the Plan for Transformation.

In June, for the first time in more than a decade, CHA opened registration for its family housing wait list. In October, CHA began selecting and screening families from the new list of 40,000 names selected by the random lottery. In May for the first time in 23 years, CHA was given the right to once again direct its own development activity when U.S. District Court Judge Marvin Aspen ended the receivership he placed on the agency.

In all, 18,555 units of housing have been completed under the Plan for Transformation, including:

- 9,178 rehabilitated senior units (98% of goal)
- 2,555 rehabilitated scattered-site units (100% of goal)
- 3,779 rehabilitated family units (76% of goal)
- 3,043 public housing units in mixed-income developments (39% of goal)

This year, the percentage of CHA heads of households who are working rose from 39 to 40 percent. As important, 71 Housing Choice Voucher Program participants graduated this year from the Family Self-Sufficiency Program, having increased their incomes from \$12,343.06 to an average of \$25,193.37 at the conclusion of the five-year program.

**How MPC can help:** MPC is committed to applying lessons learned through its past research and convenings on “Building Successful Mixed-Income Communities,” as well as Reconnecting Neighborhoods. The Chicago Housing Authority is creating a new Sustainability Council to ensure that the redevelopment of the Julia C. Lathrop Homes as the nation’s first large-scale, affordable, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) project is a model of innovation. MPC hopes to serve on that council, with a two-fold goal: secure new resources and tools for the Lathrop redevelopment to support energy and location efficiency, integration of nearby neighborhood amenities, and expansion of accessible jobs and transportation, to reduce its carbon footprint; and enhance developer engagement in public housing to troubleshoot challenges and help CHA respond to market opportunities with land acquisition and mixed income and social service financing strategies.

Reconnecting Neighborhoods is a prototype effort grounded in an understanding that building more sustainable communities requires simultaneous progress on infrastructure and on nearby amenities. This initiative, now in the implementation phase, will improve retail and transit access, and create more walkable neighborhoods around targeted CHA Plan for Transformation sites in the Mid-South and Near West neighborhoods of Chicago. The priorities of this project are to contribute to the 2011 City of Chicago South Lakefront Study, develop a focused Bronzeville Retail corridor strategy, and assist development of station-area plan around Green Line station at Damen Avenue and Lake Street. The redevelopment of Lathrop Homes is an opportunity to make the connections between housing, transportation and economic opportunity before the project breaks ground.

Also, in 2011, MPC is spearheading a pilot -- with the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and seven regional housing authorities, including CHA -- to increase the availability of quality housing options near good jobs, transit, schools, and amenities to those eligible for Housing Choice Vouchers and other HUD rental assistance programs. This pilot builds on MPC’s successful Regional Housing Initiative and Portability Pilot, and will utilize both project-based and tenant-based resources.

**MPC Resources:**

[Public Housing in the Public Interest](#)

[Reconnecting Neighborhoods](#)

[Housing Choice](#)

**References:**

[www.thecha.org](http://www.thecha.org)



## Seekers

### **Bus Rapid Transit, low-cost transit innovations, and transit-oriented development**

In December, Chicago received a \$1.6 million federal grant to study Bus Rapid Transit along a Western corridor. One well-executed pilot route could demonstrate the compelling return on investment.

**How MPC can help:** As noted previously, MPC is producing a citywide analysis for the CTA that identifies 10 Bus Rapid Transit routes that meet the following criteria:

- feasible to construct;
- consistent with livability goals;
- access to schools, jobs and parks; and
- potential for adjacent transit-oriented development.

As the Chicago Transit Authority's partner on a BRT study of the Western Corridor, MPC will ensure an open public process to pursue one of the highest-ranked routes. MPC also will continue to advocate for the implementation of a robust network of BRT routes in Chicago and its suburbs to complement the existing rapid transit network.

#### **MPC Resources:**

*The most recent draft of MPC's study, still in progress, is available upon request.*

### **Congestion pricing**

Recent case studies conducted for the Illinois Tollway point to the enormous potential of congestion pricing for squeezing efficiencies from existing infrastructure and minimizing the chokehold traffic has on the entire region. A visionary leader could mobilize Chicagoland commuters to explore this innovative tool and expand travel choices.

**How MPC can help:** MPC will support actions by the Illinois Tollway to determine optimal policies as it considers additional lanes on the Tollway system, and new governance structures that will allow toll funds to be used for expanded transit. MPC's public education activities will build on our earlier congestion pricing research and CMAP's Go To 2040 managed lane recommendations.

#### **MPC Resources:**

[\*The Road Less Traveled: Exploring Congestion Pricing in Chicagoland\*](#)

### **Increased funding for transit**

To maintain safe transit infrastructure – let alone provide for necessary service expansions such as those planned on the Red and Green Lines – Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace need nearly \$10 billion in capital funding during the new mayor's first term. He or she cannot accomplish this alone, but will need to make it a top priority and be a vocal advocate all levels of government. The next mayor will need to seek funding from regional and non-traditional sources, and make an unwavering commitment to "fix it first" investments.

**How MPC can help:** MPC has pledged to work closely with CMAP on a fresh approach to state transportation project prioritization, building off momentum from earlier proposed legislation. We will collaborate with CMAP to build a database to analyze trends and impacts of transportation investments over the past decade and will engage Metropolitan Planning Organizations (CMAP's counterparts) across Illinois. In the longer term, our legislative proposals – if enacted -- will ensure smarter spending and increased investment in transit; in the short term, it will institutionalize cross-agency coordination and reinforce regional plans. MPC also will continue to transmit its *Talking Transit* electronic newsletter, which highlights transit innovations from around the world that can be applied locally.

**References:**

[t4america.org/resources/transitfundingcrisis/](http://t4america.org/resources/transitfundingcrisis/)  
[www.rtachicago.com/](http://www.rtachicago.com/)

**More coordinated action on water solutions**

Not so long ago, the idea of re-reversing the flow of the river was inconceivable. However, Mayor Daley and others have endorsed the effort as something worth considering — to support the river as a center of transportation, tourism and recreation.

**How MPC can help:** MPC serves on the advisory panel on Great Lakes basin separation and re-reversal of the Chicago River, providing policy guidance and its unique perspective. This panel will determine whether changes could simultaneously improve sewage management, minimize flooding, ease freight movement, and control invasive species. MPC also will engage local government officials in discussions about how zoning and other decisions affect the Great Lakes.

**MPC Resources:**

[\*Charting a new course for the Chicago River\*](#)  
[\*The Chicago Area Waterway System in maps\*](#)

**References:**

<http://www.chicagolandh2o.org>  
[www.nrdc.org/water/Chicagoriver/Chicagoriver.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/water/Chicagoriver/Chicagoriver.asp)

**Redevelop landmark properties**

This includes CHA's Lathrop Homes, near Logan Square, the Michael Reese Hospital site south of the Loop, USX South Works site on Chicago's southeast side, and potentially other sites. With sound game plans, and the new mayor as quarterback, these initiatives could become prototypes for successful, sustainable, live-work urban villages. Lathrop's redevelopment is poised to set new national standards, thanks to CHA's commitment to apply LEED-ND (LEED for Neighborhood Development) principles, a comprehensive approach to sustainable planning and broad engagement.

**How MPC can help:** Whistler Crossing, in south suburban Riverdale, Ill., is the first project in Illinois to achieve LEED-ND criteria. One of 239 nationwide pilot projects under the LEED-ND rating criteria, the development is mixed-use, mixed-income and historic rehabilitation of the distressed the Pacesetter property. MPC initiated the revitalization in 2003, when Riverdale brought in MPC and Urban Land Institute-Chicago to hold a Technical Assistance Panel. MPC has several tools, including Placemaking, its Corridor Development Initiative, and Community Building Initiative, to assist complex redevelopment challenges.

Also, in 2009, MPC helped shape the LEED-ND rating system for Illinois, as a member of the LEED-ND Illinois Regional Prioritization Credits task force. Regional Priority Credits provide extra incentive (through bonus credits) for developers to address environmental issues that are significantly important to a specific area.

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[www.usgbc.org/ShowFile.aspx?DocumentID=6131](http://www.usgbc.org/ShowFile.aspx?DocumentID=6131)

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