

A BOLD VISION

FOR THE FUTURE



Thriving Communities



Equitable Infrastructure



Just Public Systems

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Cover Photo: MPC Associate Hugo Coronado and Senior Director Audrey Wennink (left-right).
Left Photo: MPC Vice President Kendra Freeman and Senior Director Drew Williams-Clark (left-right).
Right Photo: MPC Associate Debbie Liu and Senior Manager Chandra Christmas-Rouse (left-right).

OVERVIEW 2022

2022 marked a year of significant change for Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC). Turning a page on MPC's history, the year began with a change in leadership. Darlene O. Hightower was appointed as the new President & CEO of MPC.

New leadership has guided a new direction for MPC. A series of interviews and meetings with key MPC stakeholders was conducted as part of a thorough strategic planning process. Throughout the year, MPC developed a new strategic plan with a bold vision for the future. This new strategy builds on the good work of the past while laying the foundation for regional planning that will strengthen our impact toward a more racially equitable and economically just Chicago region.

MPC is forging a new vision for the future. We continue to be a catalyst for change as we advance policies and practices that make us stronger and more equitable. We bring communities, businesses, and government together across the Chicago region to find answers that work — for everyone.

With MPC's bold new vision for the future, we are committed to shaping a Chicago region where every community is valued, every person has a voice, and every neighborhood thrives.



"In 2022, it was our good fortune to welcome Darlene Hightower as MPC's new President and CEO. Darlene is a strategic, data-driven leader of high integrity, and possesses the visionary leadership to achieve a new level of impact for MPC. Throughout her first year, Darlene embarked on an innovative strategic planning process to reimagine a new vision for MPC."

– Melissa Washington, MPC Chair, Board of Governors (2021-2022)

A NEW VISION



MPC President & CEO Darlene Hightower joined MPC in 2022. Under her leadership, MPC developed a new strategic plan and vision for the future.

MPC IS COMMITTED TO A CHICAGO REGION IN WHICH **ALL COMMUNITIES HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO THRIVE.**

For nearly 90 years, MPC has been at the forefront of positive change — addressing some of the most significant challenges that have confronted our city, counties, and state. In 2022, MPC launched a new strategic plan that not only leverages our strengths but establishes a strong vision for the future. We’ve chartered a new path that will bring communities, businesses, and government together to advance policy and drive systemic change toward a more racially equitable and economically just Chicago region.

Three Pillars

MPC’s new vision is grounded in three overarching pillars: Thriving Communities, Equitable Infrastructure and Just Public Systems. These pillars are centered on equity and justice and are designed to strengthen our impact across the Chicago region.



Thriving Communities

All communities have the resources needed to thrive, including accessible and affordable housing, healthy and resilient neighborhoods, and community centered planning and engagement.



Equitable Infrastructure

Public and private capital investments adopt inclusive development standards and support sustainable infrastructure for all communities.



Just Public Systems

The public sector has the tools and internal capacity needed to transform inequitable systems and make government more transparent and fairer for all.

A Model for Planning

MPC remains committed to equitable engagement and outcomes in our region’s planning. Our long history of success at tackling some of the toughest regional planning and development challenges has been driven by collaborations and coalitions with communities, businesses, civic, and government to get at the heart of difficult issues. MPC’s impact in the region is achieved through a strong model that utilizes research, policy, advocacy, and technical assistance.

Research

Identify the problem, find, and synthesize information to raise awareness.

Policy

Develop policy, define solutions, and pathways for policy change.

Advocacy

Communicate and activate support and political will, develop strategies for legislative, administrative outcomes.

Technical Assistance

Capacity building, education, and training.



“Throughout my first year as CEO, I have been inspired by the extraordinary work this organization has accomplished and I have become increasingly encouraged by the possibilities of the future. In 2022, we created a new strategic plan that leverages our strengths, while looking boldly toward our future. As a part of this planning and new vision, I see a Chicago region with thriving communities where people are affordably housed, have quality jobs, and live in safe neighborhoods. I see a Chicago region with equitable infrastructure where people can get around on safe and efficient transit. And I see just public systems that center racial and economic equity — where every community has a voice, is valued and thrives.”

– Darlene O. Hightower, President & CEO, Metropolitan Planning Council

MPC unveiled its new strategic vision at the 2022 Annual Event, highlighted on page 5.

Annual Event

MPC’s in-person events were on hold for three years during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, we returned to in-person for our Annual Event and offered a virtual option, too. During the planning process, we reimagined the format and transformed the Annual Event from a typical luncheon to an evening event with a shorter program and added more time for attendees to network. During the 2022 Annual Event, MPC honored Dr. Helene Gayle and the Chicago Community Trust with the MPC Champion Fighter Award. Through Dr. Gayle’s leadership, the Trust has committed to closing the racial wealth gap in Chicago. Like the Trust, MPC believes addressing this racial and ethnic wealth division also addresses other issues that plague our city like violence, homelessness, food insecurity, the education gap, and other societal challenges. Both MPC and the Trust are committed to breaking these barriers and bringing this work to the forefront.

“We are working together to create a stronger future with, and for, all residents of Chicago, centering their voices and equity in all that we do.”

– Dr. Helene Gayle, MPC 2022 Champion Fighter Award honoree



MPC President & CEO Darlene Hightower (left), 2022 MPC Champion Fighter Award Honoree Dr. Helene Gayle (center), and MPC Board Chair Melissa Washington (right) at the 2022 Annual Event.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES



MPC Senior Director Audrey Wennink and Associate Hugo Coronado visit Washington Park, the site of a resident-led summer walking tour organized in partnership with Equiticity and other neighborhood groups.

WE BELIEVE ALL COMMUNITIES DESERVE TO THRIVE

Bringing plans to action and residents to the table

From changing temperatures to changing lake levels, the Chicago region already experiences the effects of a changing climate. But how can our region stop contributing to climate change, while also mitigating its effects? The answer is by planning and by taking action. This year, MPC partnered with the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus (author of the 2021 Climate Action Plan for the Chicago Region) and Active Transportation Alliance to host a five-part event series about implementation of the plan. With the transportation sector as one of the largest contributors to climate change in our region, the event series highlighted non-car modes of transportation, like biking, walking, and transit, as a vital part of the solution to the climate change puzzle.

Connecting stakeholders on stormwater management

No community should fear the rainy season. But with seemingly boundless stormwater run-off and flooding after rainfall, some residents are left fearing for their homes, their belongings, and their health. Stormwater management and flooding require concerted action across borders, boundaries, and jurisdictions. With many leaders, workers, and actors in the field, extensive coordination and communication are critical. In 2022 MPC continued its role as facilitator of the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative (CSC) to do just that. Each month, the CSC met to learn from invited experts, build cross-sector partnerships, and share resources related to stormwater and flooding challenges. This year, we returned to in-person gatherings, including a site-visit to a former industrial site and current Chicago Park District park: Big Marsh Park in South Deering of Chicago.



700+
regional residents
attended the event
series.



211
person total attendance

- 88 unique participants across
- 9 virtual meetings and 2 in-person meetings



Top: The walking tour explored the cultural and economic assets of neighborhoods on Chicago's South and West Sides.



Bottom: MPC Board member Bernard Loyd speaks to participants about The Forum in Bronzeville.

Walking the walk with community partners

Every community has value and every neighborhood deserves the opportunity to highlight its assets. Last summer, MPC and transportation ally Equiticity partnered with local community organizations to co-create three walking tours in Little Village, North Lawndale, and Bronzeville/Washington Park. Each tour featured 5-7 destinations that highlighted key neighborhood catalysts and assets in order to share positive narratives about the communities, in contrast to those that are often shared in the media. Following the Equiticity model of community mobility rituals, these tours provided the opportunity for intimate gatherings for community members and visitors to connect.



74

walking tour participants

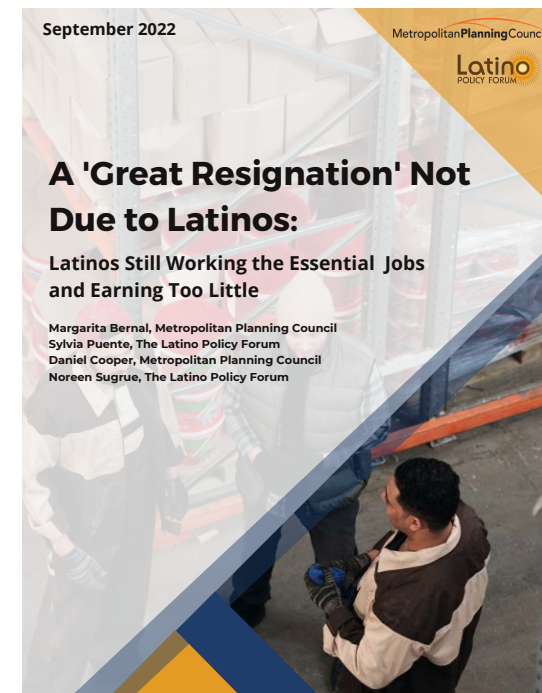
- 4 neighborhoods;
- 102 virtual event attendees

Shedding light on Latino workforce challenges and illuminating solutions

While no one escaped the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Latino workers were among the groups hardest hit. Today, Latinos continue to fill essential positions, often with low-wages, no benefits, and few protections. How can we ensure that this vital part of our workforce is set up for success, in and out of the workplace? Building on MPC's work with the State of Illinois' Future of Work Taskforce, MPC and the Latino Policy Forum collaborated to release a policy brief with recommendations for how the State of Illinois can ensure a bright future for Latino workers. Among these recommendations are addressing the homeownership gap, enhancing wages and benefits, like paid time off and access to affordable childcare, and making significant contributions to immigration reform to make pathways to citizenship easier.

“Many of the trends that make headlines, and drive policy, leave out the experiences of historically marginalized groups. This report brings to the forefront the often-invisible experience of Latinos in the workplace and lays out a policy roadmap to better protections for Latino workers and a stronger Illinois economy.”

– Dan Cooper, Senior Director, Metropolitan Planning Council



50%

of Latino workers earned less than \$15 per hour, nationally, in March 2022.

Read the full report: metroplanning.org/2022MPCLPFReport

EQUITABLE

INFRASTRUCTURE



MPC Vice President Kendra Freeman and Senior Director Drew Williams-Clark connect at an ETOD site on Chicago's South Side.

WE BELIEVE INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENTS **MUST** **BE DISTRIBUTED** **EQUITABLY**

Taking Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) from an idea to reality

Affordable housing. Accessible transit. Walkable communities. These are vital components of the safe and equitable built environment that all Chicago residents deserve regardless of zip code. Unfortunately, these amenities are not equitably distributed in our region. In 2022, MPC played an important role in the development and advancement of an historic new ordinance, providing analysis and convening key stakeholders. The Connected Communities Ordinance expands where transit-oriented development can happen and builds more affordability into the equation, putting transit-oriented development within reach of more Chicagoans. In addition to the legislative success of the Ordinance, MPC also partnered with Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) to combine preexisting Equitable Transit Oriented Development analysis tools into a new interactive tool that residents, community groups, and developers can use going forward to analyze the impact of such development in their neighborhoods.

Advocating for equitable funding to improve drinking water

MPC believes everyone deserves access to clean drinking water in their homes. 2021 was a historic year for clean drinking water funding. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which dedicates lead service line replacement funds, and the State of Illinois adoption of legislation to require the



MPC was one of the

80+

organizations working together with City staff in the Equitable Transit-Oriented Development working group to co-develop the legislation and see it through City Council.

\$12M

is the total potential savings to Cook County developers through use of StormStore to meet stormwater management requirements. The new website helps streamline trades.



MPC Manager Justin Williams (far right) joins fellow clean drinking water advocates to testify in support of equitable funding to improve Illinois' drinking water.



MPC Senior Director Drew Williams-Clark speaks at a We Rise Together event, co-hosted by The Chicago Community Trust. Photo: Complements of We Rise Together: For an Equitable & Just Recovery.

replacement of all lead service lines, put the issue and a partial solution at the forefront of the conversation. But how would funds be spent and which communities would be targeted by this unprecedented investment? In 2022, MPC underscored the equity imperative of lead service line replacement funding. At the invitation of Sen. Tammy Duckworth, MPC testified at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works in order to highlight the need for sufficient, equitably distributed funding, along with assistance to help communities access federal funding.

“Success in this matter is a racial equity imperative: in Illinois, Black and Latinx residents are twice as likely as white Illinoisans to live in the communities that contain nearly all of this toxic infrastructure. As a matter of environmental justice, Illinois’ communities simply must complete (lead service line replacement) as quickly as possible.”

– Justin Williams, Manager, Metropolitan Planning Council

Streamlining stormwater credit trading to improve the region’s climate resilience

As of 2022, stormwater credit trading in Chicago has never been easier. MPC and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) launched the new and improved StormStore website to make stormwater management easier, greener, and more cost-effective. MPC and TNC convened stakeholders who piloted the site to improve the content, design, and user experience. Stormstore.org now includes updated resources, a new credit registry, and an area devoted to featured projects. These enhancements to Stormstore.org support developers, engineers, and landowners in trading required stormwater credits.

Convening stakeholders to catalyze economic development on the South and West Sides

In 2022, MPC supported We Rise Together: For an Equitable & Just Recovery, a funders collaborative hosted by the Chicago Community Trust since 2020. The initiative works with community members to respond to the urgent economic needs of Black and Latinx communities. As part of our inclusive development work, MPC supported the initiative in 2022 by facilitating three community-based working groups comprised of community and corporate leaders. Our goals: to support primarily BIPOC social entrepreneurs who are using We Rise Together funds to expand their operations into better spaces, and to help catalyze economic development on the South and West Sides of Chicago.

Highlighting financial challenges and pathways to development

Equity should be at the center of how development is supported across Chicago. Yet research shows that over the last 10 years, financial incentives (monetary benefits typically used to fund development that otherwise would not occur) have not been equitably distributed. The result: not all neighborhoods have equitable opportunity to thrive. To shed light on this data and outline where additional support should go, MPC partnered with The Chicago Community Trust to produce equitableincentives.org, an interactive web tool that allows visitors to explore where funding has historically gone, where support should go, and recommendations for action.



MPC facilitated

3

working groups in 2022 with 7 WRT grantees.

- The working groups included 11 project leads and 20 resource partners (corporate, civic, and community-based)

JUST PUBLIC SYSTEMS



MPC Senior Manager Chandra Christmas-Rouse presents about the MPC Change Teams work.

WE BELIEVE THE PUBLIC SECTOR CAN TRANSFORM INEQUITABLE SYSTEMS AND MAKE GOVERNMENT **MORE TRANSPARENT AND FAIRER FOR ALL**

Facilitating systems change through conversation

Local government and advocates have made significant and laudable progress in advancing equitable policies in cities, and yet, once legislation is passed, too often the follow-through needed to truly enact change is lacking. To shift longstanding structural inequities in institutions, coordinated effort between policy, process, and culture change is necessary. MPC's Change Teams program provides partners with the learning, collaboration and experimentation capabilities needed to catalyze positive change and institutionalize the equity we seek. In 2022, MPC worked closely with the Department of Housing and staff from two of their two bureaus to develop projects that address structural inequities in government departments. Leading thoughtfully designed workshops over the course of nine months, MPC gave participants the training they need to implement actionable solutions and create lasting equitable policy and culture change. This work will continue in 2023.



MPC worked with

2

cohorts with a total of 15 participating staff members.

Supporting the transformation of Chicago's river system

Since the 2016 release of *Our Great Rivers*, MPC's vision for an inviting, productive and living river system, we have been working with stakeholders to make that vision a reality. We've tracked and celebrated Our Great Rivers achievements and progress; we've supported an annual cohort of community focused projects funded by the Chicago Community Trust; and we've co-managed the River Ecology and Governance Task Force (Task Force) with Friends of the Chicago River and the Department of Planning and Development. In 2022, MPC assisted with multiple local projects. Cohort projects spanned all of Chicago's rivers, including partners from Alliance for the Great Lakes, Calumet Connect, Current, Friends of the Parks, UIC Great Cities Institute, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, North River Commission, and OAI, inc. As part of its work on the Task Force, MPC hosted quarterly meetings and convened two working groups. The Development Review Working Group reviewed five projects, providing input to developers on river-specific improvements. The System Plans Working Group hosted two community open houses along the Chicago River's South Branch, asking for community ideas and visions for vacant riverfront sites. These recommendations were provided to the City to help inform future development. The Task Force also made recommendations on updates to the City of Chicago's Sustainable Development Policy. Based on the group's engagement, anticipated changes to the policy include strategies that are specific to river edge projects.

Expanding voices and embedding values in citywide planning

For far too long, Chicago has lacked a unifying vision for how the city, its communities, and its residents can thrive in an equitable, healthy and safe environment. In 2020, MPC helped launch the City of Chicago's first citywide planning process in more than 50 years. MPC was instrumental in making it the strongest, most informed, and most value-driven process possible. Since then, MPC has supported the We Will Chicago citywide planning process as a partner, advisor, and participant on various aspects of the framework plan. In 2022, MPC convened a historical reckoning working group, created and piloted a meeting-in-a-box toolkit to strengthen public engagement, provided research support on ways to implement We Will Chicago, and worked with partners on a process to apply a health and racial equity lens to the framework's policy ideas. To expand We Will Chicago's reach, collect feedback from more residents, and put Chicago leaders in conversation with global leaders in the relevant thematic pillars, MPC co-hosted a seven-part Global Voices, Local Action event series with the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

"We Will Chicago focuses on improving conditions and opportunities in 8 pillars. Goals set for each Pillar will enable the City to continue to improve how Chicagoans work, play and live."

– We Will Chicago Framework Plan

Engaging communities to address historic harms caused by transportation infrastructure

In the 1960s and 1970s the creation of the highway system, and the placement of these corridors through communities they were never designed to serve, did enormous damage to Chicago and its neighborhoods. In 2022, MPC performed research to frame the historic harms of such transportation infrastructure through a human lens in our Reconnecting Communities Report: thousands of homes bulldozed, thousands of residents displaced, and higher levels of auto-related pollution and noise with the attendant poor health outcomes that persist to this day. The MPC Reconnecting Communities effort engaged the public in defining solutions based on residents' lived experience through an interactive portal and by working with community-based organizations on the ground. MPC then assessed project proposals that could make good candidates for federal funding, including complete streets to create walkable and bikeable options for local residents, new stations to make transit more accessible and convenient, even highway caps to restore public space and bring communities together. The results informed the City of Chicago's federal Reconnecting Communities grant application for planning along the Eisenhower Corridor.



In October of 2022

80+

people attended open houses offering their ideas of what they'd like to see along their riverfronts in the South Branch.



In the decade between 1956 and 1966, highway construction demolished

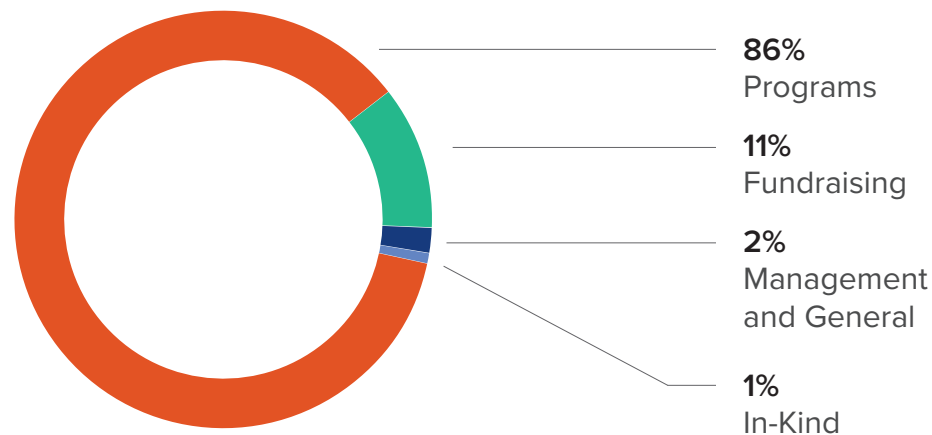
37K

housing units per year nationally, displacing more than 475,000 households and more than a million people.

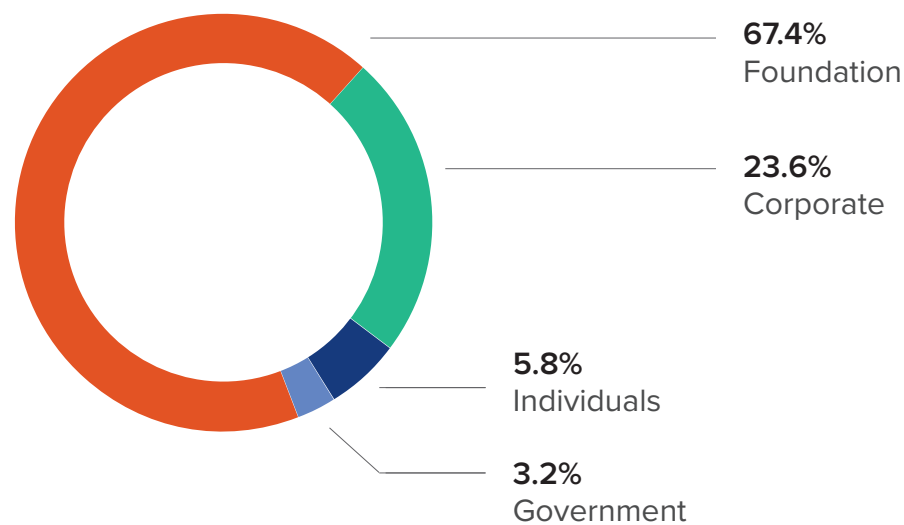
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

MPC is able to advance its mission of creating a more equitable and sustainable Chicago region thanks to the generous contributions of individuals, corporations, and foundations. 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.

Operating Expenses By Category



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.

\$500,000 and above

The Chicago Community Trust

\$250,000 - \$499,999

The Joyce Foundation

\$100,000 - \$249,999

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The Equiticity Racial Equity Movement
Thompson Family Fund at The Chicago Community Foundation
Melissa Y. Washington

\$1,000 - \$4,999

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LEADERSHIP

MPC's leadership plays a crucial role in building strong partnerships that bring together diverse perspectives and resources to create positive change. By fostering collaboration between government, community, and business leaders, MPC is able to bridge gaps and address complex challenges in the Chicago region. We believe that respectful and trusting relationships are key to successful problem-solving, and we are committed to upholding these values in all of our partnerships. We value the contributions of our partners and look forward to continued collaboration to create a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

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We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have supported MPC's work in promoting racial and economic justice in the Chicago region. Your generosity has allowed us to work toward our new vision of creating Thriving Communities, Equitable Infrastructure, and Just Public Systems. We remain committed to shaping a Chicago region that values every community and where everyone can affordably live, work, and thrive. Thank you for being a crucial part of our journey toward building a more equitable and just society.

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. MPC is committed to shaping a Chicago region where every community is valued, every person has a voice, and every neighborhood thrives.

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.



Metropolitan**Planning**Council

140 South Dearborn Street, Suite 1400
Chicago, Illinois 60603
312.922.5616

metroplanning.org |     @metroplanners

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