



2020 Annual Report

Equity in Uncertain Times

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2020.

It was a year many of us simply want to discard. A pandemic surged, wildfires raged, racist violence kindled outrage, and the national political landscape disoriented us.

But with crisis comes openings for change. The turbulence of 2020 delivered unexpected new energy, new conversations, and new visions for tomorrow. Understanding that the status quo is unacceptable, there is no time in our 86-year history when the Metropolitan Planning Council has been more driven to advance the changes that will unleash a better, bolder, more equitable future for everyone.

We deserve a metropolitan Chicago region where every child has access to safe drinking water and no one is evicted due to job loss during a pandemic, where every person can enjoy urban green space, and no one commutes three hours on buses to work, where every neighborhood resident's voice is heard in a comprehensive citywide plan and where no remote-learning student goes without internet at home. We've never been more committed to shaping a region where every person can thrive.



Listening

Historically, urban planning has a reputation for exclusion, but we're charting a new course.

Improving citywide planning through Chicago's first comprehensive plan since 1966

Citywide plans allow us to envision the future, collectively. The first step? Building a collective. That's why MPC, in partnership with multiple City departments, convened



people in autumn 2020 to explore how Mayor Lightfoot’s three-year citywide planning process, “We Will Chicago,” can best include the voices of all residents, incorporate critical lessons from other cities, and overcome our region’s past planning challenges.

“

What has changed is my view on cross-neighborhood partnership. We have an opportunity here to build connections across the city so that the divide between north/south can be minimized.

— A WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT IN THE WE WILL CHICAGO CITYWIDE PLANNING PROCESS

Exploring Illinois' water challenges through the lens of equity

COVID-19 has shown us how important water is to our well-being—but it's also highlighted that clean, affordable, accessible water is not a given for many. To change that, MPC has worked with communities, nonprofit partners, and decision-makers to learn what stands in the way of an equitable water future for Illinois residents. We helped establish an advisory group to the Illinois State Water Plan update, focused on ensuring the plan emphasizes equity and a robust public engagement strategy. We supported the development of a coalition that is creating an Illinois Water Justice Agenda to ensure water affordability, accessibility, and quality. We provided technical assistance to the communities of Hazel Crest and Evanston on lead service lines and water affordability, respectively. And we created a working group focused on designing flooding relief that works for Chicago homeowners from all neighborhoods and income levels.

“

We're excited about the technical assistance we're receiving from the Metropolitan Planning Council. Maintaining our water system is very important.

— DANTE SAWYER, HAZEL CREST VILLAGE MANAGER

Changing stereotypes about what makes a “good neighborhood”

“Bad neighborhood.” It's a term as simplistic as it is damaging. By challenging false narratives around segregated neighborhoods, we can build solidarity and empathy to change perceptions. MPC's Research Team is bolstering the case for reparations and targeted investments through conversations with residents about their neighborhoods' assets, as well as about how policymakers can systemically address the harms of structural racism.

Founding one of America's largest minority-owned investment firms. Beating Michael Jordan at basketball. These are a couple of the accolades about John

Rogers, MPC's 2020 Champion Fighter Award recipient. John's vision and expertise extends past his business, Ariel Investments, into boardrooms and C-suites across America. In the keynote at our September 2020 Annual Event, John spoke about our country's growing racial wealth gap, the impact of George Floyd's murder, and how a strong economy undergirds change. In case you missed it, Governor J.B. Pritzker joined one of many voices praising John in a surprise celebratory video.

“

***This is a transformative time in our country's history...
The wealth gap in this country has gotten larger over
the past 40 years, and people see it now.***

— JOHN W. ROGERS, JR., CHAIRMAN, CO-CEO, AND CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER,
ARIEL INVESTMENTS, AND MPC'S 2020 CHAMPION FIGHTER AWARD RECIPIENT

Documenting the lived experiences of people using our region's transportation system

When it comes to investments in transportation, decisions should be based on more than numbers and data. People's experiences matter. MPC partnered with Equiticity and the University of Illinois at Chicago on focus groups around the ways in which transportation is a barrier to employment. We also looked at 40 of America's largest metropolitan regions for models of equity-grounded transportation funding decisions. Blended together, these approaches can ensure that the Chicago region's transit system benefits those whom we rely on the most.



7,647

people attended MPC events in 2019



Visioning

A better, bolder, more equitable future for everyone in Chicagoland requires long-range vision.

Building a stormwater credit trading market

In 2020, MPC celebrated a win that was 12 years in the making: an updated ordinance approved by the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater



Chicago (MWRD) that greenlights two Cook County pilot stormwater credit trading programs. Stormwater credit trading is an innovative, market-based approach that enables infrastructure that reduces flooding to be built efficiently where it's needed most. MPC and The Nature Conservancy are managing these pilots through a partnership known as StormStore. We are unlocking new opportunities for property owners, developers, and communities to work together to reduce costly flooding and unlock economic development in northwest and southeast Cook County.

Moving Toward Racial Equity in Cook County's Forest Preserves

Green space is healthy for our bodies, minds, and our sense of community. But structural racism has limited access to recreation and to fresh air at our region's unique network of urban forests. MPC staff pursued racial equity with the Forest Preserves, making changes both internally and in a public-facing plan. Using a

racial equity lens to guide land acquisition, staffing, and programming will connect more residents of Cook County to biodiversity, which can help both people and places thrive.

Fighting for a more accessible region

Whether commuting to a job or anywhere else, accessibility is key to ensuring that our robust transit network helps people get where they need to go. Connecting workers to transit reduces employee turnover costs, according to findings from our partnership with the Boston Consulting Group. And communities across our area are falling short on their commitments to accessibility, according to our analysis in partnership with the Great Lakes ADA center. Shoulder-to-shoulder with experts, allies, and stakeholders, we can move our region Toward Universal Mobility.

Developing a community-driven vision for land in Rogers Park

Bees buzzing. Hoses running. These are the sounds of a community garden near the CTA Howard transit hub. Since Alderwoman Maria Hadden is committed to honoring local opinions on the future of this transit-oriented land parcel, she's partnering with MPC to deploy the unique, hands-on convening method we've used in places from Aurora to Woodlawn to understand community desires regarding development. A wrinkle? The pandemic. This year, we reinvented our Corridor Development Initiative into something new—complete with social-distancing-friendly virtual workshops, virtual polling, live translation, and take-home design kits.



1,963,000

impressions across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram,
and LinkedIn

Outlining a path to a healthier Chicago without disparities

In the near-north Streeterville neighborhood, residents can expect to live to 90, while nine miles south, Englewood residents will only live, on average, to 60 years. It's the largest life expectancy disparity in the U.S., and it's a problem that Healthy Chicago 2025 aims to solve. MPC helped the Chicago Department of Public Health develop recommendations that address our complex social and institutional barriers to health, from the formation of an environmental equity working group, to using health data in building inspections, to increasing police accountability.



Collaborating

We change perceptions, conversations, and the status quo by working together.

Preserving affordability together in East Garfield Park

It's a familiar double-edged sword: well-intentioned investments in public amenities can raise property values and displace families. We convened East Garfield Park residents from May 2019 through March 2020 for a public planning process to identify shared affordability goals and strategies—from a strong, independent neighborhood coalition to a Community-Driven



Land Trust. We released the resulting Blueprint for Community Action at a resource fair at the Garfield Park Conservatory.

Joining together for inviting, productive, and living rivers

When National Geographic called Chicago's riverside trails some of the nation's best "secret urban walks," they weren't kidding. This summer, partners from Openlands to the Chicago Community Trust joined the public in helping us

41

events hosted online and around the region.

celebrate our rivers in a summertime social media campaign, #GreatRiversChicago. It brought to life the plans, projects, and passion that have improved the Chicago, Calumet, and Des Plaines rivers over the past four years since the release of Our Great Rivers, the first-ever unifying and forward-looking vision for all three of Chicago's rivers.

Committing to the Calumet

Seasons and political administrations change, but long-term, cross-sector engagement is transformative. After more than a decade of partnerships throughout the Calumet region, we're seeing movement on many fronts. We're promoting access to green spaces through advising the Illinois Port District on a vision for both a working port and community assets at Lake Calumet, supporting river-oriented projects like connecting Altgeld Gardens' residents to an urban forest, and developing Conservation Action Plan strategy to improve open space along the Little Calumet River. For more than five years we've convened the Calumet Stormwater Collaborative for critical conversations among stakeholders in a shared watershed on how to reduce urban flooding. Just recently Opportunity Advancement Innovation, Inc. partnered with us on helping municipalities jointly maintain green infrastructure and create green jobs. When our call for Drinking Water 1-2-3 technical assistance projects went out, we were excited that the south suburban communities of Hazel Crest, Robbins and Sauk Village all requested help on critical water supply planning needs. The list goes on—Diversity, Equity and Inclusion trainings with the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, affordable housing assessments through Homes for a Changing Region, land use planning with the Forest Preserves of Cook County, and more. Substantial and sustained, our commitment to the Calumet is core to who MPC is and what we do.

Building capacity among communities

The layered crises of 2020 was particularly devastating to our region's smaller communities. Sales tax revenues dried up just as demands for services increased. MPC and its Transform Illinois partners assist with models of services sharing and consolidation. MPC subject matter experts offered a helping hand on water supply solutions for Joliet and its neighbors and through groups such as the Northwest Water Planning Alliance and the Southwest Water Planning Group.

Mapping a brighter future after COVID-19

The pandemic has raged like a wildfire, laying bare our region's—and nation's—structural inequities. But while policies and lack of investments created the tinderbox, COVID-19 was only the match. In a region where Black residents are more than twice as likely to die from coronavirus as their white counterparts, MPC joined the Field Foundation and more than 20 other local institutions and researchers to create an interactive mapping tool whose data reveals truths about the unjust impacts of this cruel illness. And this tool is guiding a deployment of resources to achieve an equitable recovery.



306

news mentions across the U.S.



Advocating

As a policy change organization, we use our influence to create change.

Instilling equity practices internally at MPC

Our commitment to racial equity means nothing if we don't have difficult internal conversations that lead to change. Members of MPC's Equity Committee developed a customized framework for implementing Anti Racism Anti Oppression practices within our institution, advanced assistance from Chicago Regional Organizing for Antiracism.



Battling our region's lead pipe problem

Chicago has more lead service lines than any other city in America, and lead pipes are a frightening and costly problem in communities across Illinois. Lead exposure can lower children's IQs, increase attention-related behavior problems, reduce growth and hearing, and create a lifetime of negative health repercussions. Through MPC's advocacy for a statewide solution to lead service lines, we are working with partners across Illinois to ensure that every municipality has the resources needed to replace every lead service line—the only equitable solution. We're working with communities to prioritize hard-hit areas and vulnerable populations, such as schools and daycares. And we're working with policy makers to ensure that Black and Brown communities benefit from the good jobs that lead service line replacement will create.

Raising our voice for community benefit after COVID-19

It's impossible to overstate how dramatically the pandemic has upended our lives. In the face of upheaval, MPC leaders have worked to protect our region's residents and institutions, such as folks struggling to make rent as their jobs are swept from beneath their feet. We've advocated for changes that protect renters from an "Eviction Cliff." We've also shaped media coverage through advising the monthly Crain's Chicago Business "Forum" and writing for venues like the Chicago Sun-Times to ensure that Chicagoland's public transportation network survives a "carpocalypse." When the going gets tough, it's more important than ever to fight for the assets that help everyone thrive.

Shining a light on the inequities of remote learning, and helping secure \$50 million to connect students

Did you know that one in five Black or Latinx learners lack home access to broadband in Chicago? In April, we published findings with Kids First Chicago revealing that children of color are less likely to have the internet or the connected devices at home that are necessary for remote learning. In June, Mayor Lori Lightfoot raised \$50 million from business and philanthropy leaders for "Chicago Connected," an effort that provides free, high-speed internet access for four years to Chicago Public Schools learners, possibly the nation's largest high-speed internet connection effort. A flurry of news stories cited our research, a catalyst for actionable change that will help students in homes across the city.

“

We need to provide basic internet for free and make it easily accessible for all parents in the need right now.

— CLAIBORNE W., AUSTIN PARENT, AS QUOTED IN "DIGITAL EQUITY IN EDUCATION IN THE CORONAVIRUS ERA," A 2020 REPORT RELEASED BY MPC AND KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

Building a path forward for equitable transit-oriented development

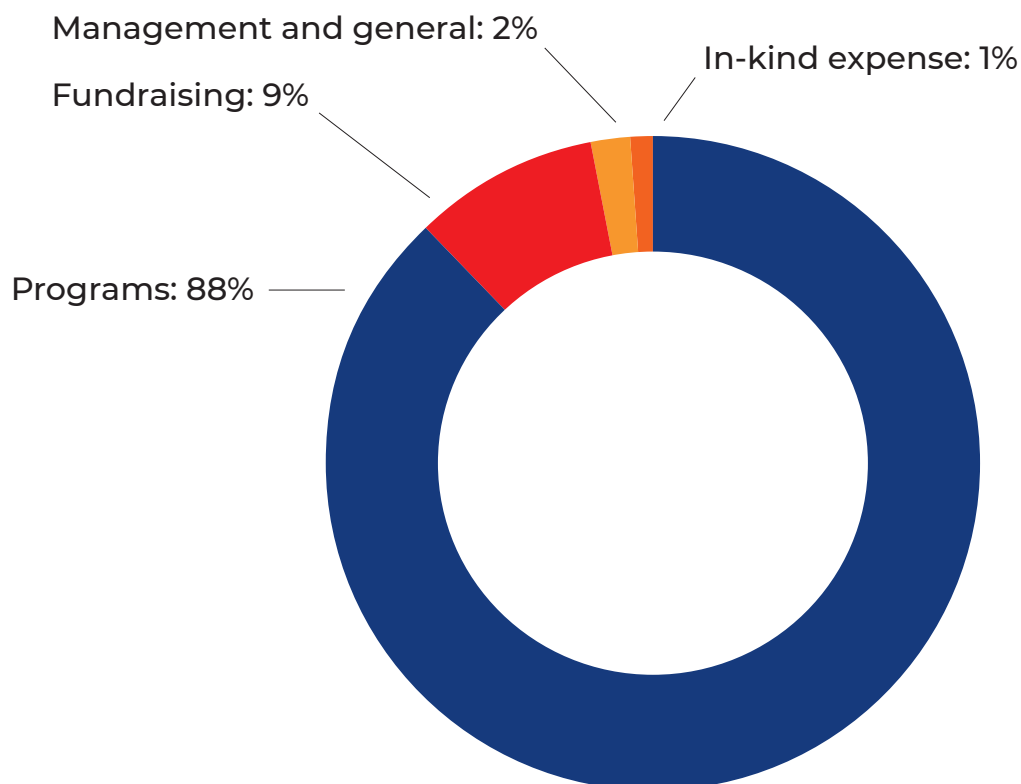
In 2013, the City of Chicago passed an ordinance designed to promote development near transit, but in practice, these zoning reforms heavily and inequitably benefitted Chicago's North and Northwest sides. In an effort that spanned two mayoral administrations, 18 months, over 80 voices, and a pandemic, MPC joined Elevated Chicago partners in advocating for more equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD). The result? The City of Chicago's first-ever ETOD plan, released in September 2020, a step toward addressing our public health, racial justice, and climate change crises through smart development around transit hubs.

The exhaustion of 2020 caused many to ask, "How much worse can things get?" As an independent policy change organization, the Metropolitan Planning Council instead focuses on how much better things can be. Thank you for being there, for supporting our work, for inching us closer to a more equitable, more joyful future.

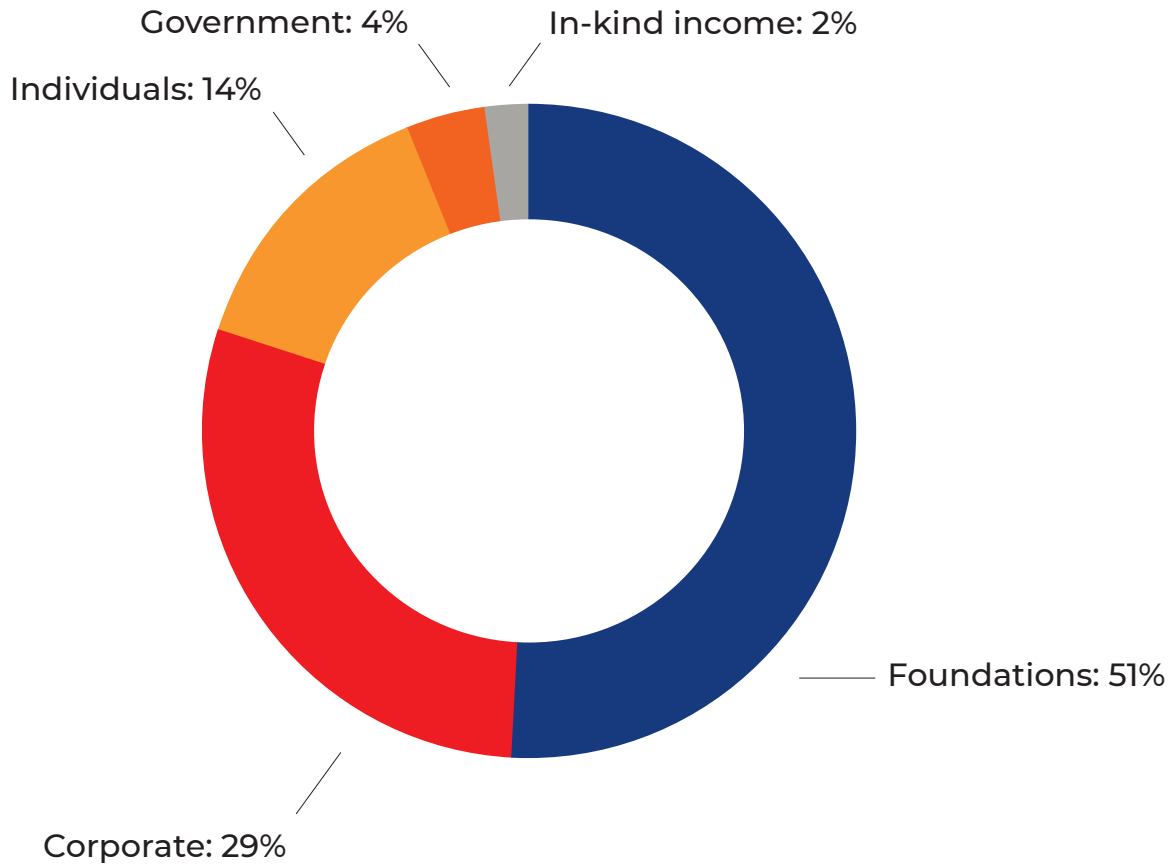
Financial summary

MPC's research, advocacy and demonstration projects are funded primarily by contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations.

2020 operating expenses



2020 operating revenue by source



\$250,000–\$499,999

The Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust

*The Chicago Community Trust

*Grand Victoria Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Harris Family Foundation

*The Joyce Foundation

JPMorgan Chase

McCormick Foundation

McDougal Family Foundation

PNC Bank

*Polk Bros. Foundation

\$100,000–\$249,999

The Crown Family

Ann M. Drake

\$50,000–\$99,999

BMO Harris Bank

Ellen Carnahan
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Comcast
Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley
Foundation
Kenneth C. Griffin
Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan
*Steans Family Foundation
U.S. Bank

\$20,000–\$49,999

Abbott
Bandon Dunes Golf Resort
Bank of America
BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois
Patricia and Laurence Booth
Bowman C. Lingle Trust
Bucksbaum Retail Properties, LLC
CIBC Bank USA
Colonel Stanley McNeil Foundation
ComEd
Conant Family Foundation
Kent and Elizabeth Dauten
The Duchossois Group, Inc.
Elevate Energy
First Midwest Bank
GCM Grosvenor
Jacques N. Gordon and Elizabeth H.
Wiltshire
Groupon
Lavin Family Foundation

Lendlease Development Inc.
Holly and John Madigan
Mansueto Foundation
McDonald's Corporation
Andrew J. McKenna, Sr.
Steven N. Miller
Lee M. Mitchell
Northern Trust
Peoples Gas
The Prince Charitable Trusts
The Pritzker Traubert Foundation
Reyes Holdings, LLC
The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation
The Vistria Group
Union Pacific Corporation
William Blair & Company, LLC
Wintrust Financial Corporation
Yagan Family Foundation

\$10,000–\$19,999

AbbVie Inc.
Alliance for the Great Lakes
The Allstate Corporation
AptarGroup, Inc.
Association of American Railroads
The Banc Funds Company
The Canning Foundation
CenterPoint Properties Trust
Centro
Charles River Associates
Chicago Federation of Labor

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Cleveland-Cliffs ArcelorMittal
Michelle L. Collins
E. David Coolidge, III
Dr. Scholl Foundation
J. Michael Drew
The Edgewater Funds
Edwardson Family Foudation
Enterprise Community Partners
John R. Ettelson
Franczek P.C.
Linda and Wilbur Gantz
Nancy S. Gerrie
Illinois Tool Works Inc.
InterPark Holdings LLC
The John Buck Company
Jones Lang LaSalle
Karen P. Layng
Lazard
Jim and Kitty Mann
Mansueto Office Inc
The Nature Conservancy
Northwestern Medicine
Joan Rockey
Roland Berger Consultant
John W. and Jeanne M. Rowe
San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR)
Katherine M. Scherer
Sam and Dona Scott Fund

Sterling Bay Companies
Structured Development, LLC
Don and Liz Thompson
University of Chicago

\$5,000–\$9,999

Nicholas W. Alexos
Michael J. Alter
Ariel Investments, LLC
Baird & Warner, Inc.
CDW
Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters
Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Ltd.
Chris and Cira Conley
d'Escoto, Inc.
DLA Piper LLP (US)
Edelman
Joan and Robert Feitler
Bon and Holly French
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
John S. Gates, Jr.
Hill and Cheryl Hammock
Heitman
James & Catherine Denny Foundation
Carol and Larry Levy
John and Judy McCarter
National Equity Fund, Inc.
Natural Resources Defense Council
Pepper Construction Company
Perkins & Will

R.M. Chin & Associates, Inc.
Emma Rodriguez-Ayala and Eric
Chitwood
John W. Rogers, Jr.
Julia M. Stasch
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Bruce W. Taylor
Ventas, Inc.
Vitale Family Foundation
Melissa Y. Washington
Wight & Company
Wayne Whalen and Paula Wolff

\$1,000–\$4,999

Anonymous
Ben and Sheila Applegate
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MarySue Barrett
Francis and Prudence Beidler
Virginia Breen
Matthew Brewer
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\$500–\$999

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Grisko LLC
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Bernard Loyd
Mary K. Ludgin
Suzanne Malec-McKenna
Clark Maxfield
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Jeff E. Smith
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Walder Foundation
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\$150–\$499

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Renita L. Dixon
Farr Associates
Jean Franczyk
Donald Haider
Errol and Libby Halperin
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Amy Turnbull Khare
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Wyllys Mann
David May
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McDonough
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Paula C. Pienton
John and Stacy Sassaris
Adele S. Simmons
Jeffrey Sriver
Benjamin Swartzendruber
Amber Webb

*Signifies donors to Economic Security for IL,
the organization for which MPC serves as
Fiscal Sponsor.

Leadership

MPC bridges gaps between government, community and business leaders, enabling them to more powerfully join forces and collectively improve our region. We believe that strong partnerships rooted in respect, listening and trust are critical to creative, effective problem-solving.

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** denotes resigned in 2020

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Forest Bailey

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Betsy Benito

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Chester Bell

U.S Bank

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LUCHA

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Laritza Lopez

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Wyllys Mann

Baird & Warner, Inc.

Robert Miller

Applied Real Estate Analysis, Inc.

Bob Palmer

Housing Action IL

Sameer Patel

Holland & Knight LLP

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National Equity Fund

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Mary Vasys

Vasys Consulting Ltd.

Stacie Young

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Juanita Irizarry

Friends of the Park

Pete Saunders

Village of Richton Park

Terri Worman

AARP

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Bill Balling

WRB LLC

Christina Burns

Village of Oswego

Eileen Chin

R.M. Chin & Associates, Inc.

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