
BUILDING CAPACITY AND CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Transportation 101 for the Chicago Region

November 2022



CNT



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We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the participating Community-Based Organizations from the Transportation Equity Network.

We would also like to thank our partner agencies: Metra and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT).



Report Authors:

Fletcher Coil

Anagha Devanarayanan

Heidy Persaud



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INTRODUCTION



About the Transportation Equity Network (TEN)

The [Transportation Equity Network \(TEN\)](#) is a coalition of community groups, equitable transportation advocates, and other community members who work with decision-makers to embed racial equity and mobility justice into transportation decisions and investments. Black and Brown representatives of community groups hold the majority of leadership positions within the coalition.

This is a long-term effort, meant to build and manage a network that influences transportation decision-making while building capacity. The guiding goal is to reduce the racial wealth gap caused in part by unequal transportation access. TEN focuses on pressing topics that include advocating for equitable decision-making processes, transportation improvements without displacement, and preserving and reframing transit service in the context of COVID-19.

TEN's guiding goal is to reduce the racial wealth gap caused in part by unequal transportation access.

This process seeks to elevate the voices of those who are most underrepresented and negatively impacted in the traditional transportation planning process.

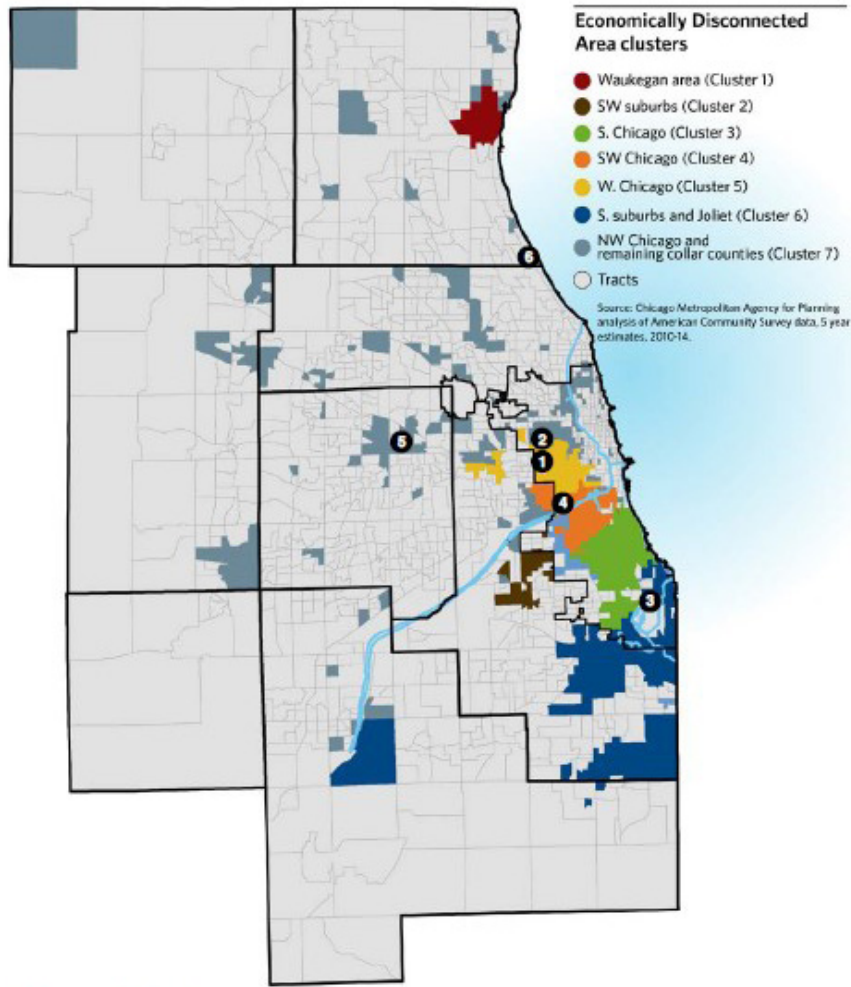
About this Project

This capacity-building project seeks to integrate communities in transportation decisions while contributing to more equitable outcomes. This is partially done by working directly with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) who represent the interests of the people they represent or live in the communities they serve. This process intends to strengthen the voices of residents who are most underrepresented in traditional transportation planning processes. The TEN model advocates to overcome institutional barriers that stand in the way of better CBO involvement, create new systems for CBO participation, and organize to demand a place at the transportation table.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS (TRANSPORTATION EQUITY NETWORK)

Source: Northwest Center Chicago





- 1 - Austin Coming Together
- 2 - Northwest Side Housing Center
- 3 - Claretian Associates
- 4 - Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
- 5 - DuPage Federation On Human Services
- 6 - Bodyworks For Vets

1 AUSTIN COMING TOGETHER (ACT)
Austin (Chicago), Illinois

4 LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION
South Lawndale (Chicago), Illinois

2 NORTHWEST CENTER (NWC) & NORTHWEST SIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NWSCDC)
Belmont Cragin (Chicago), Illinois

5 DUPAGE FEDERATION ON HUMAN SERVICES REFORM (DFHSR)
Lombard, Illinois

3 CLARETIAN ASSOCIATES
South Chicago (Chicago), Illinois

6 BODYWORKS FOR VETS
Highland Park, Illinois

AUSTIN COMING TOGETHER (ACT)

Location: Austin (Chicago), Illinois

www.austincomingtogether.org

Located on Chicago's west side, ACT supports the mission of increasing the community's collective action to improve the quality of life in their community. The community has struggled with a lack of investment and support, battling an image of crime and violence. ACT plays a critical role in guiding a unified vision by building the capacity of the residents. They enable efforts to revitalize the image of Austin, promote assets and its real estate market, support the education system, and create a safe neighborhood for all ages. Austin is the largest community area in Chicago and has the second largest population.

NORTHWEST CENTER (NWC) & NORTHWEST SIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NWSCDC)

Location: Belmont Cragin (Chicago), Illinois

www.northwestcenterchicago.org

www.northwestsidecdc.org

The Northwest Center responds to the needs of the community through resources to improve the economic well-being and quality of life in Belmont Cragin and the surrounding communities. Majority of the community are Latino/a, forming 81.2% of the population. The community also is home to 39% foreign-born residents. The Northwest Center addresses these critical neighborhood issues of housing, businesses, and jobs through resident-led, innovative, and data-informed measures. The community's immediate goals in transportation include access to different modes of transportation and improving transportation safety.

CLARETIAN ASSOCIATES

Location: South Chicago (Chicago), Illinois

www.claretianassociates.org

Claretian Associates serves the community of South Chicago and the surrounding areas which is home to 76.5% of African American and 19.8% of Latino/a residents. Claretian Associates focuses on collaborative measures to provide affordable housing and vital community services that benefit the safety and well-being of families. As the only non-profit affordable housing developer in South Chicago, Claretian Associates also supports efforts to access affordable housing, food security, financial stability, and generational wealth. Additionally, they assist in achieving the goals to develop recreational public spaces and secure walkable streets that improve neighborhood safety.

BODYWORKS FOR VETS

Location: Highland Park, Illinois

www.bodyworksforvets.org

Bodyworks For Vets provides assistance to veterans on their road to recovery through holistic therapies that complement their current treatments. BFV is located in Highland Park and Evanston, and serves a diverse population of veterans from throughout the region.

DUPAGE FEDERATION ON HUMAN SERVICES REFORM (DFHSR)

Location: Lombard, Illinois

www.dupagefederation.org

DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform is a collaboration of government and key community organizations that identify ways a local community can address its human services needs using its own resources and resourcefulness. Dupage Federation on Human Services Reform was formed in 1995 by a governor's office initiative as one of five "learning laboratories", whose role was to demonstrate a new approach to collaboration between government and community in the implementation of welfare reform.

LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION (LVEJO)

Location: South Lawndale (Chicago), Illinois

www.lvejo.org

LVEJO was founded in 1994 by public school parents who learned about the potential exposure of their children to dangerous particles during school renovations at Joseph E. Gary Elementary. After forcing the school administration to change their plans, the parents turned their attention to other issues of environmental justice in Little Village. After twenty years working for environmental justice in Little Village, LVEJO continues to organize for a healthier community in Little Village and beyond. Building upon the successful clean power, public transit, and open space campaigns, LVEJO remains committed to organizing with those most impacted by industrialization and climate change.

Source: Little Village Environmental Justice Organization



WHAT DOES CAPACITY BUILDING MEAN TO YOU?

Best Practices: Learnings from CBOs

Throughout this project, it was important to have consistent dialogue with community-based organizations. The CNT team interviewed the following community leaders:

- JeVon Moore (ACT)
- Jeremy Cuebas (NWC)
- Fabian Cisneros (NWSCDC)
- Jason Estremera (NWSCDC)
- Angela Hurlock (CA)
- David Roth (DFHSR)
- Jose Acosta (LVEJO)

The interviews helped understand the critical issues to tackle, best practices for community engagement and outreach, and opportunities for improvement.



WHAT DOES CAPACITY BUILDING MEAN TO YOU?

Best Practices: Learnings from CBOs

CBOs shared their approach to capacity and knowledge building, with an emphasis on the need for collaborative efforts and intergenerational learnings to include community needs into decision-making.

““ *We can teach communities; but complete learning occurs when they experience the process.*

-Jose Acosta
Environmental Planning & Research Organizer at LVEJO

”

1. Real time experiences and exposure to issues, discussions, and advocacy efforts are the best teachers.

2. Defining concepts and projects are important for CBOs who might be working with transit agencies for the first time. It helps them understand how to better frame questions for the next time they engage with policy- and decision-makers.

”

3. Educational materials form a crucial role in introducing newcomers to challenges and opportunities in the field. They also provide the historic, social, and economic context for the respective project location.

““ *A lot of progress has come with sitting at the table and experiencing the discussion with TEN, CDOT, and the community.*

-JeVon Moore
Planning and Investment Manager at ACT

4. Hone in on relaying the importance of transportation literacy. Community members need to understand the impacts these infrastructure decisions are having in their communities.

5. Validate the effort put in by the CBOs, ensure that they are being heard, and make sure they aren't taking someone else's seat at the table.

6. Organizations value differing perspectives of work since social issues are handled at different capacities.

7. Using lived experiences from past generations helps to better understand communities.

““ *Education provided by the (transportation) equity network has been helpful to the organizations in the region. These introductory educational tools are particularly helpful for newcomers to transportation.*

-David Roth
Executive Director at DFHSR

”

““ *TEN has been helpful in making information accessible. That helps in understanding the context - that add value to learning.*

-Fabian Cisneros
Community Engagement and Economic Development Manager at NWSCDC

”

WHAT DOES CAPACITY BUILDING MEAN TO YOU?

Best Practices: Learnings from CBOs

“Capacity building means leveraging my lived experience and knowledge with someone who has more or leveraged research. Bringing in new perspectives, you only know your own journey. As we look to the generations that preceded us, we can see solutions and consequences from the resources and challenges they presented us.”

-Angela Hurlock
Executive Director at Claretian Associates

“The TEN network has been effective with transportation difficulties and the city as a whole. The definition of capacity building is a knowledge of skillsets & resources organizations use to help build efforts to understand and provide resources and programming to communities. As it is related to this project, it helps understand best practices and rationale for transit and public health decision making, and is very illuminating for the members of the community with the work we are doing.”

-Jeremy Cuebas
Youth Organizer at NWC

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT LESSONS

- Meet people where they are at.
- Outreach must be intentional and focus on relationship building.
- Communities shouldn't be consulted only when there is a new project. There should be consistency and familiarity with agencies so they do not feel like they are just "another task".
- Schedule meetings that suit the community the best. Send out several meeting dates and times, and work from there.
- Provide input channel for those most at risk, in addition to surveys and questionnaires that are addressed to everybody.
- Provide space for organizations to share their own work and how they are connected to the challenges that the meeting is set to address. It helps CBOs to extend valuable contributions to the discussions.

“It is important to be intentional about who is attending these meetings. Making sure that it is intergenerational, people from different income groups, and people from diverse cross sections.”

-Jason Estremera
Executive Director at
NWSCDC

TRANSPORTATION 101: FEATURING CHICAGO TRANSIT AGENCIES

Source: flickr



METRA

Source: Metra



What is Metra?

Metra was created in 1984 after the railroad that operated commuter rail service had declared bankruptcy. Metra then emerged as a response to the need to oversee commuter service in the Chicago area, either by operating it directly or by extending subsidies. It is one of the largest commuter rail systems in North America, serving Cook, DuPage, Will, Lake, Kane, and McHenry counties in Illinois (Metra, 2019).

3,700
SQUARE MILES

488
ROUTE MILES

1,155
MILES OF TRACK

11
MAIN LINES

242
STATIONS

691
REVENUE TRAINS



Metra's Role in the Transit System

Along with Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Pace, Metra forms an integral part of the Chicago transit universe under the financial and planning oversight of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA).



The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) provides operating and capital funding to Metra.



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

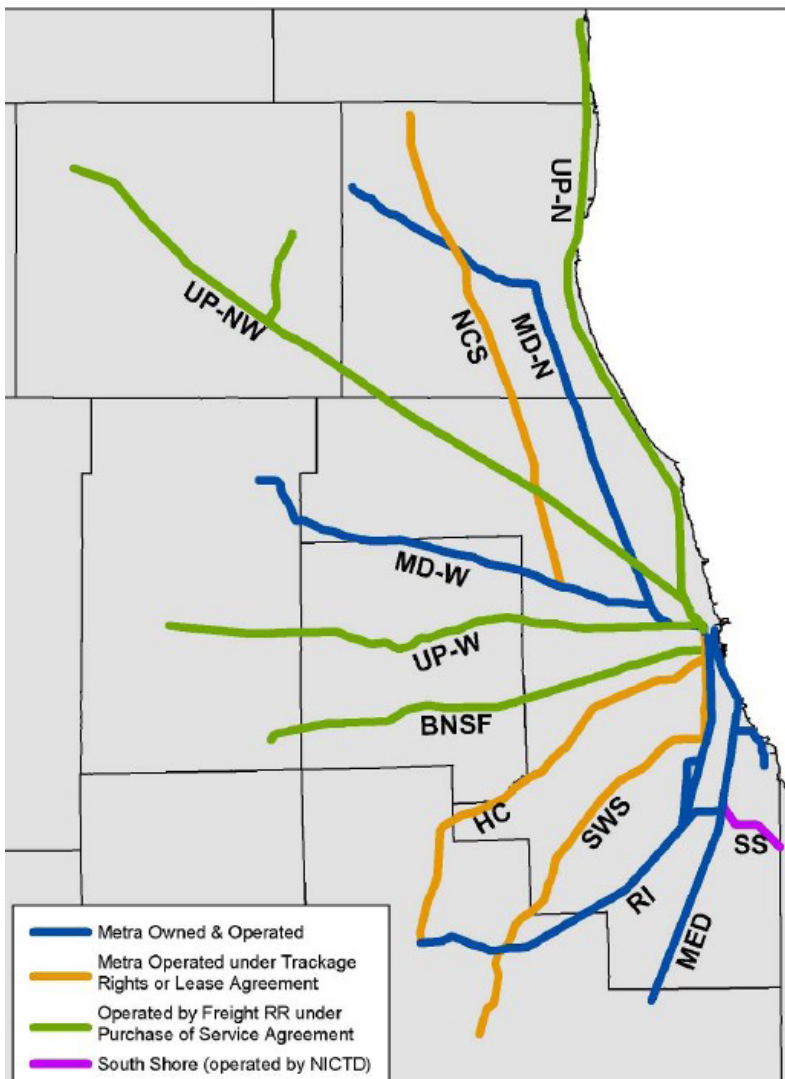
Metra is also a participant of CMAP Regional Planning through the MPO Policy, Transportation, and other committees.



Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) provides safety and oversight and discretionary capital funding to Metra.



Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides formula, discretionary capital funding and oversight to Metra.



Metra's operation

4 lines

Owned and operated by Metra

3 lines

Operated by Metra and owned by freight railroads

4 lines

Owned and operated by freight railroads under purchase-of-service agreements

Metra forms a part of a complex operating environment of more than 1,300 trains moving through Chicago on an average weekday, out of which 737 are Metra trains.

During rush hours, freight traffic essentially comes to a halt for Metra to meet its 95% on-time performance goal.

Importance of Metra

For its riders

Metra brings multiple benefits for its riders by helping maintain a healthy lifestyle, providing personal mobility and freedom to everyone, and saving their time and money.

SAVES TIME



Riding Metra reduces the travel time for an average commuter by 12 hours or 6 days a year

SAVES MONEY



It save \$166 per month compared to driving

HEALTHY



Contribute to healthier well-being

For the Chicago region

Metra offers economic, environmental, and social benefits to the Chicagoland region.

EMPLOYMENT



Metra directly employs 2,800 people

GREATER RETURNS



Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates approximately \$4 in return

REDUCE POLLUTION



One person with a 20-mile round trip can reduce their carbon footprint by 4,800 pounds/ year by using transit

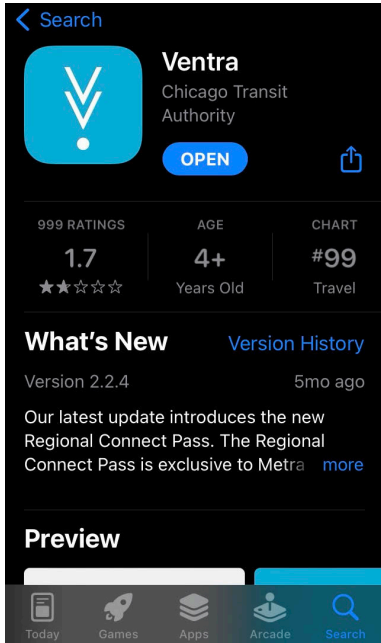


Commuting on Metra

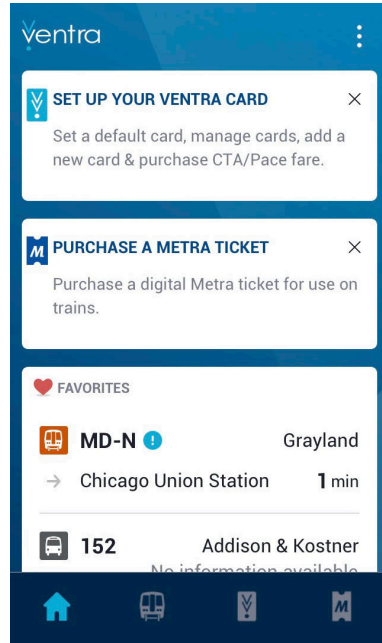


Purchasing a Metra Ticket

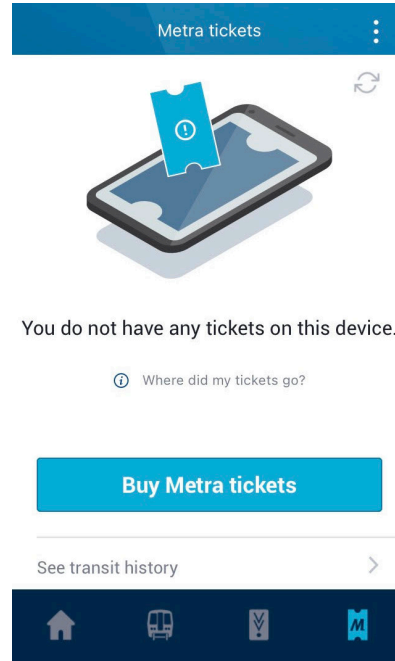
1 Download the "Ventra" app from the app store



2 Open app & select "Purchase a Metra Ticket"



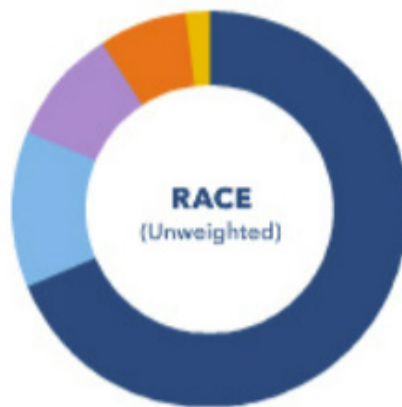
3 Select "Buy Metra tickets"



4 Select the line to be using

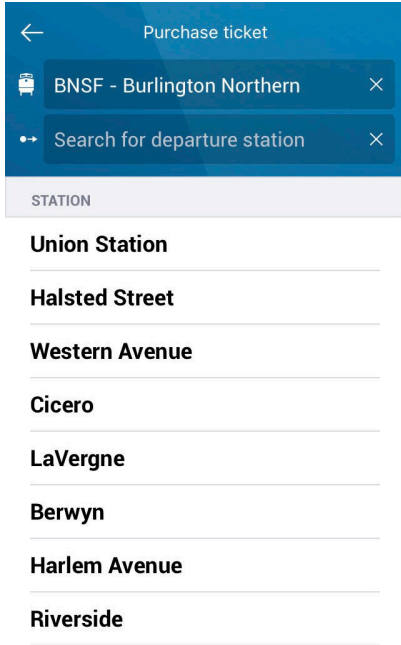
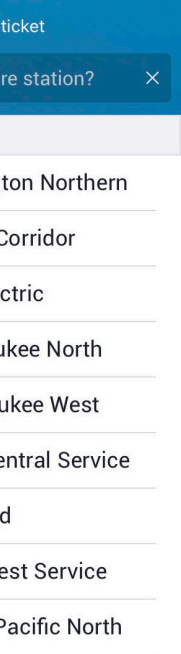


Metra's Ridership

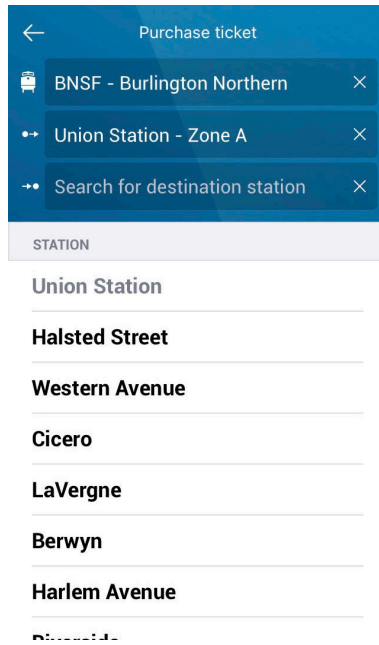


line you will

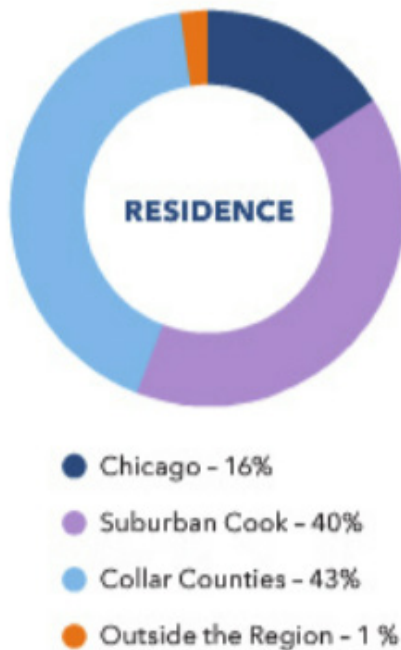
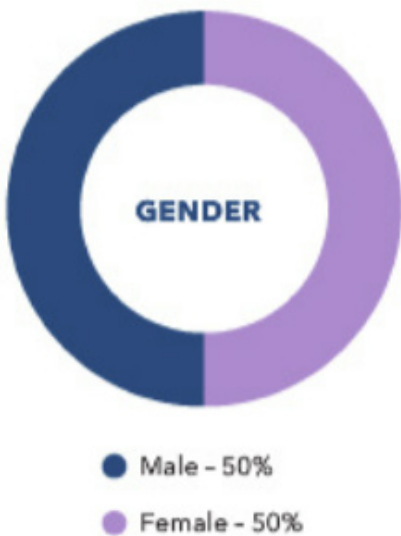
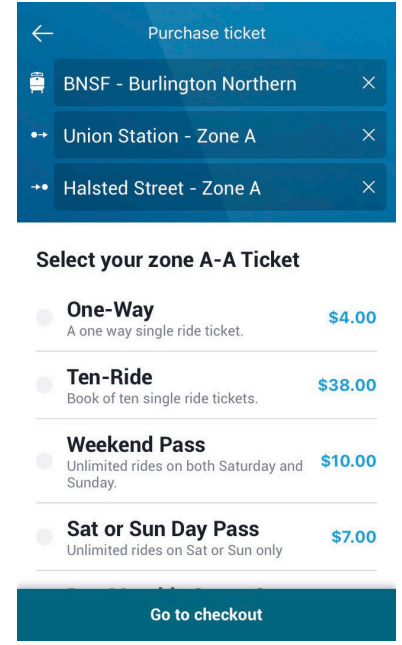
5 Select your departure station



6 Select your destination station



7 Select your "Zone Tickets" and head to "checkout"



Source: Metra fact book 2021

Next Steps for Metra

Health and Safety

As ridership returns with growing numbers, Metra is committed to adding cars to trains, and trains to the schedule to allow for physical distancing. They plan to shift peak trains to off-peak times to account for new riding patterns.

Climate Responsive

Metra is developing a system of zero-emission vehicles and also exploring battery-operated vehicles. They will provide fuel savings and provide enhanced reliability.

Regional Equity

Metra's goal will always be to provide affordable, reliable, safe, and frequent service throughout the region's service area. They will adopt equitable pricing and travel incentives like the new "Regional Connect Pass", \$10 day pass, \$6 3-zone day pass, and \$100 monthly super saver pass.

Reverse-Commuter Ridership

Metra recognizes the changing character of its ridership, particularly post-COVID with growing suburb-to-suburb markets.



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CDOT)



What is CDOT?

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for public way infrastructure, which includes planning, design, construction, maintenance, and management. CDOT is accountable for every inch of the city in terms of public way and how people get from one point to another.

CDOT strives to keep the city's surface transportation networks and public way safe for users, environmentally sustainable, in a state of good repair, and active. They ensure that Chicago's diverse residents, businesses, and guests all enjoy quality transportation options.

4,100
MILES OF
STREETS

7,400
MILES OF
SIDEWALK

335,000
STREETLIGHTS

2,800
INTERSECTIONS

2,100
MILES OF
ALLEYS

26
MILES OF
BOULEVARDS

150
MILES OF
CHICAGO RIVER

300
BRIDGES

1,400
RAILROAD
VIADUCTS

150+
SQ MILES OF
BIKESHARE

13,000
BIKE RACKS

400+
MILES OF
BIKEWAYS

CDOT Departments

Administration

Commissioner's Office

Citywide Services

Sign Management

Engineering

Oversees the design and construction of larger projects.

Traffic Safety

Oversees the camera program, monitors speed and levels of traffic, undertakes traffic study at intersections and tackle safety issues.

In-House Construction

Undertakes smaller construction tasks at the ward level like patching potholes and paving.

Electrical Operations (DEO)

Oversees streetlights.

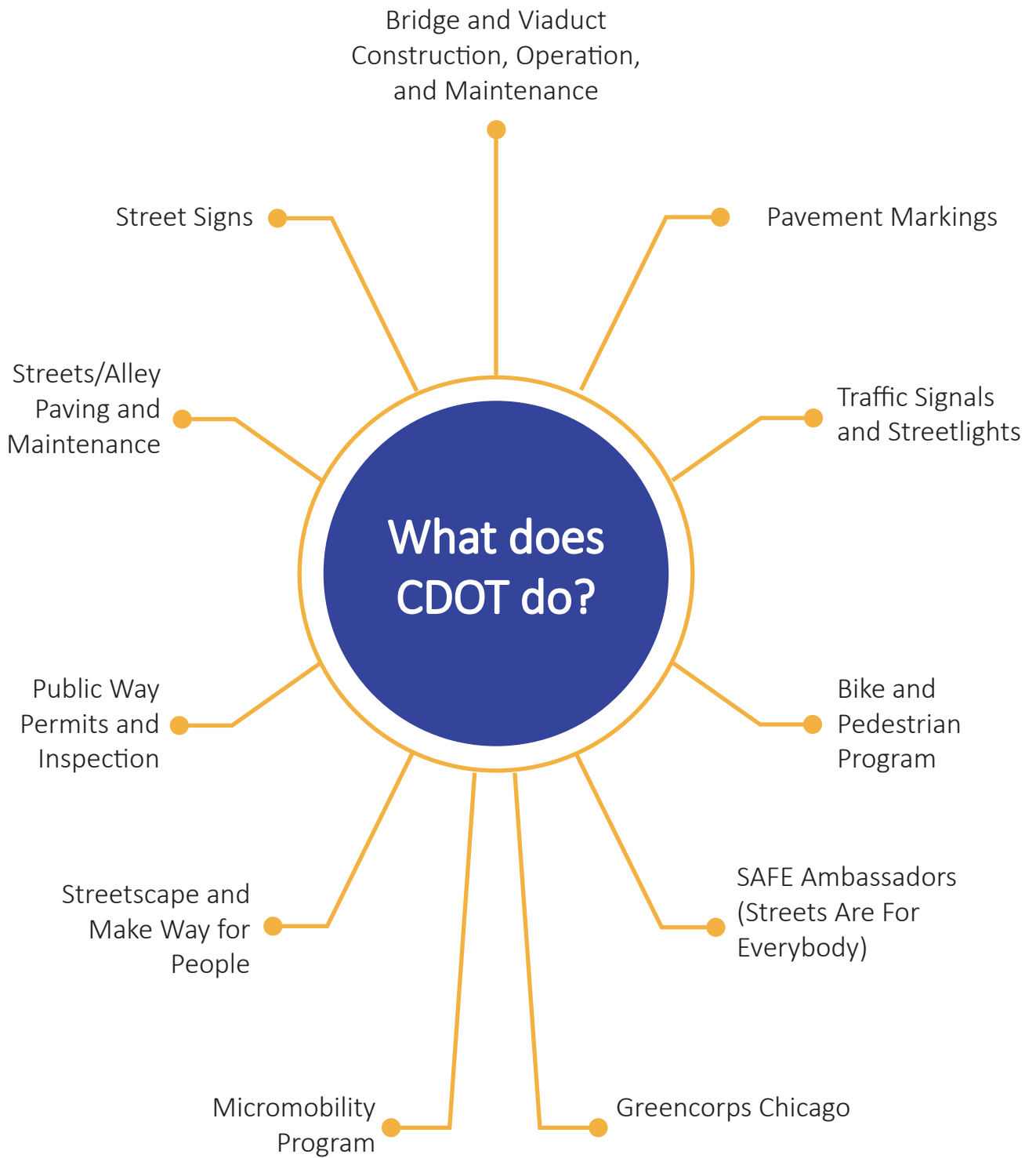
Infrastructure Management (DIM)

Oversees permits and other activities that happen in the public way.

Project Development

Works with the Department of Planning and Development and other city departments to execute city-level programs.





Get Involved with CDOT

CHICAGO MOBILITY COLLABORATIVE



Chicago Mobility Collaborative (CMC)

The [Chicago Mobility Collaborative \(CMC\)](#) is a new public forum focusing on walking, biking, transit, public space, mobility justice, and accessibility. The initiative aims to build a safer, equitable, and accessible transportation by bringing residents and community organizations together. CDOT's Strategic Plan for Transportation guides the development of CMC, with the intention of incorporating feedback from community groups, transportation advocates, and other stakeholders in Chicago.



Vision Zero Chicago (VZC)

[Vision Zero Chicago \(VZC\)](#) is aimed to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries from traffic crashes. Through partnerships between City leadership and the public, the Vision Zero Chicago Action Plan commits to reducing traffic crashes that cause death and serious injury. Equitable distribution of resources and inclusive community engagement are vehicles to achieve this mission.



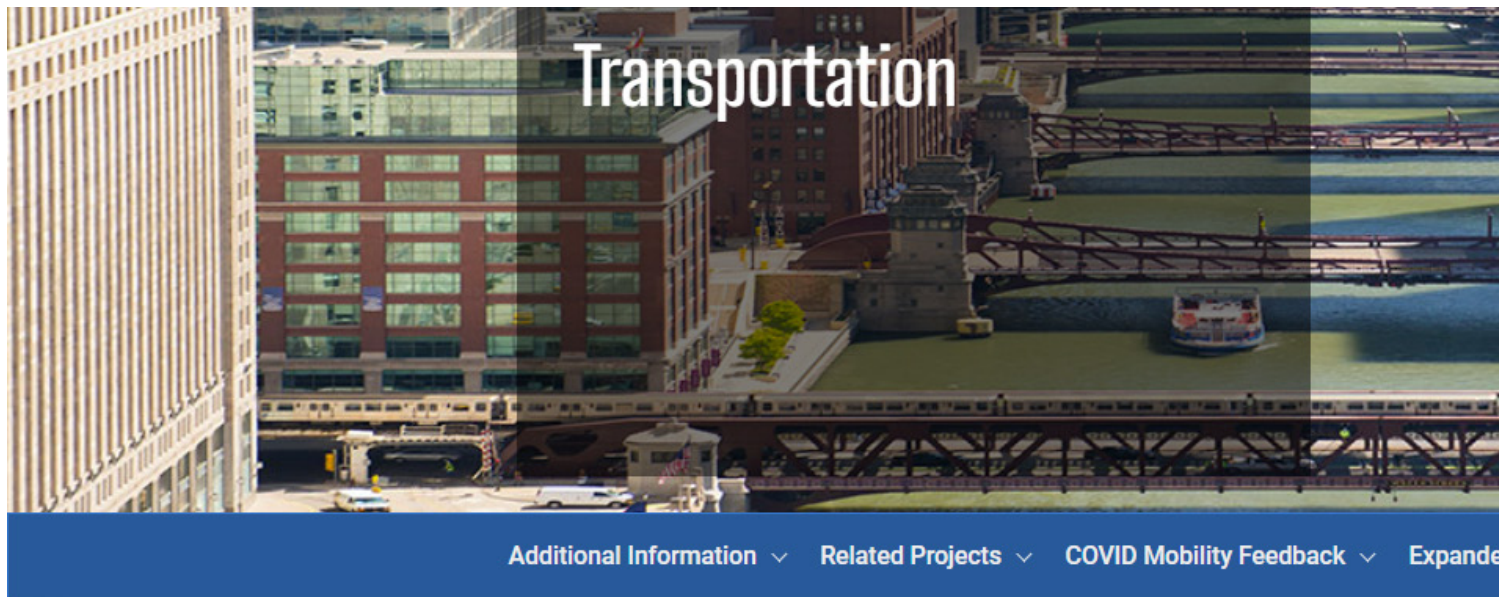
Bike Chicago

CDOT aims to make cycling a safe and affordable option for more Chicagoans through the [Bike Chicago initiative](#). CDOT will facilitate more residents cycling through a bike distribution program, in addition to connecting bike networks and increasing the number of low stress and protected bike lane miles in the city. As a part of the program, CDOT will distribute 5,000 bicycles and safety and maintenance equipment, over the course of 4 years to age and income eligible residents.

More on CDOT

WEBSITE

The CDOT website hosts information about all the on-going initiatives, most recent news, project areas, supporting information, and city data. Visit <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cdot.html> to learn more.



[Home](#) / [Departments](#) / [Transportation](#)

The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) is responsible for public way design, construction, maintenance and management.

Featured Services and Programs

The logo for the CDOT Strategic Plan, featuring a blue square with a red star and the text "CDOT STRATEGIC PLAN".

CDOT Strategic Plan
Strategic Plan for Transportation 2021

A blue icon of a person riding a bicycle.

Open Streets
Shared Streets and other placemaking opportunities.

A blue icon of a document with a folded corner.

The logo for Open Streets, featuring the text "OPEN STREETS" with icons of a person walking, a person pushing a stroller, and a bicycle.

Open Streets
Shared Streets and other placemaking opportunities.

A blue icon of a document with a folded corner.

A blue icon of a document with a folded corner.

The logo for Chicago Alfresco, featuring the text "CHICAGO ALFRESCO" and a circular icon with a stylized "H" and "A".

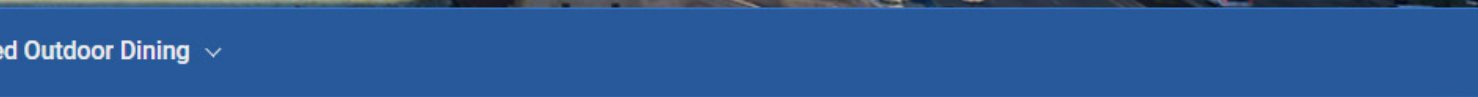
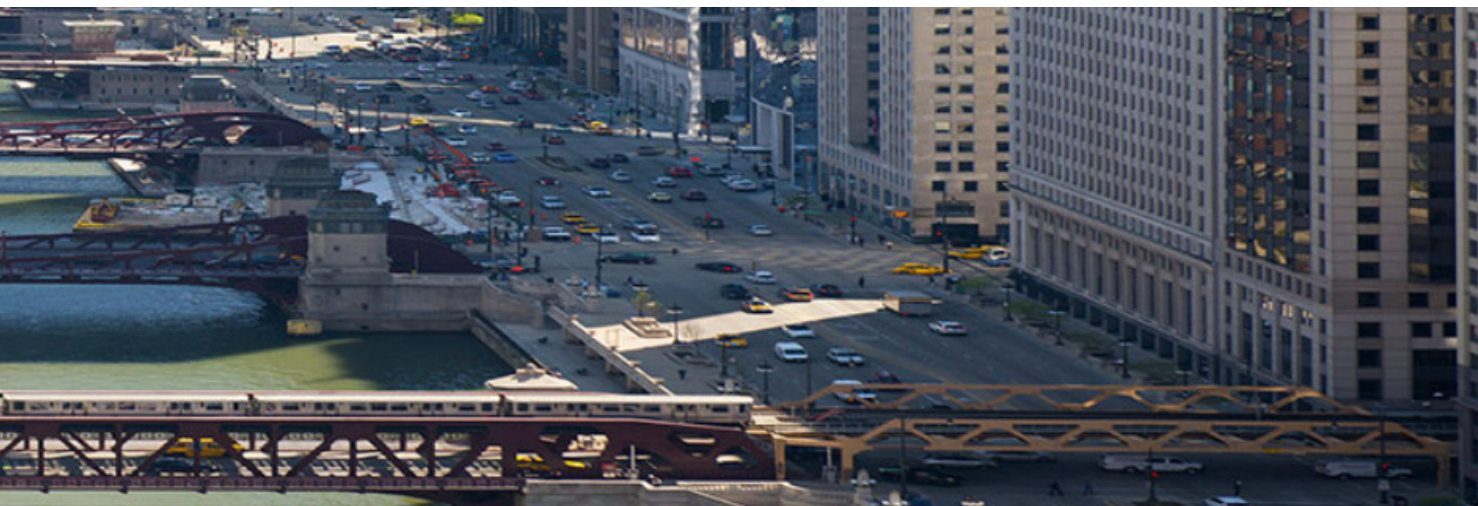
Chicago Alfresco
Request for Proposals Guidelines and Application

A blue icon of a document with a folded corner.


A blue icon of a document with a folded corner.

The website also links to related resources:

- [Chicago Traffic Tracker](#)
- [Redefine the Drive](#)
- [Bicycle program](#)
- [Chicago's SAFE Ambassadors](#)
- [Safe Routes to School](#)
- [Shared Cost Sidewalks](#)
- [Chicago E-Scooter Pilot Program](#)



Infrastructure, including planning,



Mobility During COVID-19
Guidelines for Travel



Department Main Office

Transportation
Phone: 312.744.3600
Fax: 312.744.1200
[Contact Us](#)
2 N. LaSalle Street
Suite 1110
Chicago, IL 60602
[Get Directions](#)

Leadership
Gia Biagi
Commissioner

Department Facts

About Us:

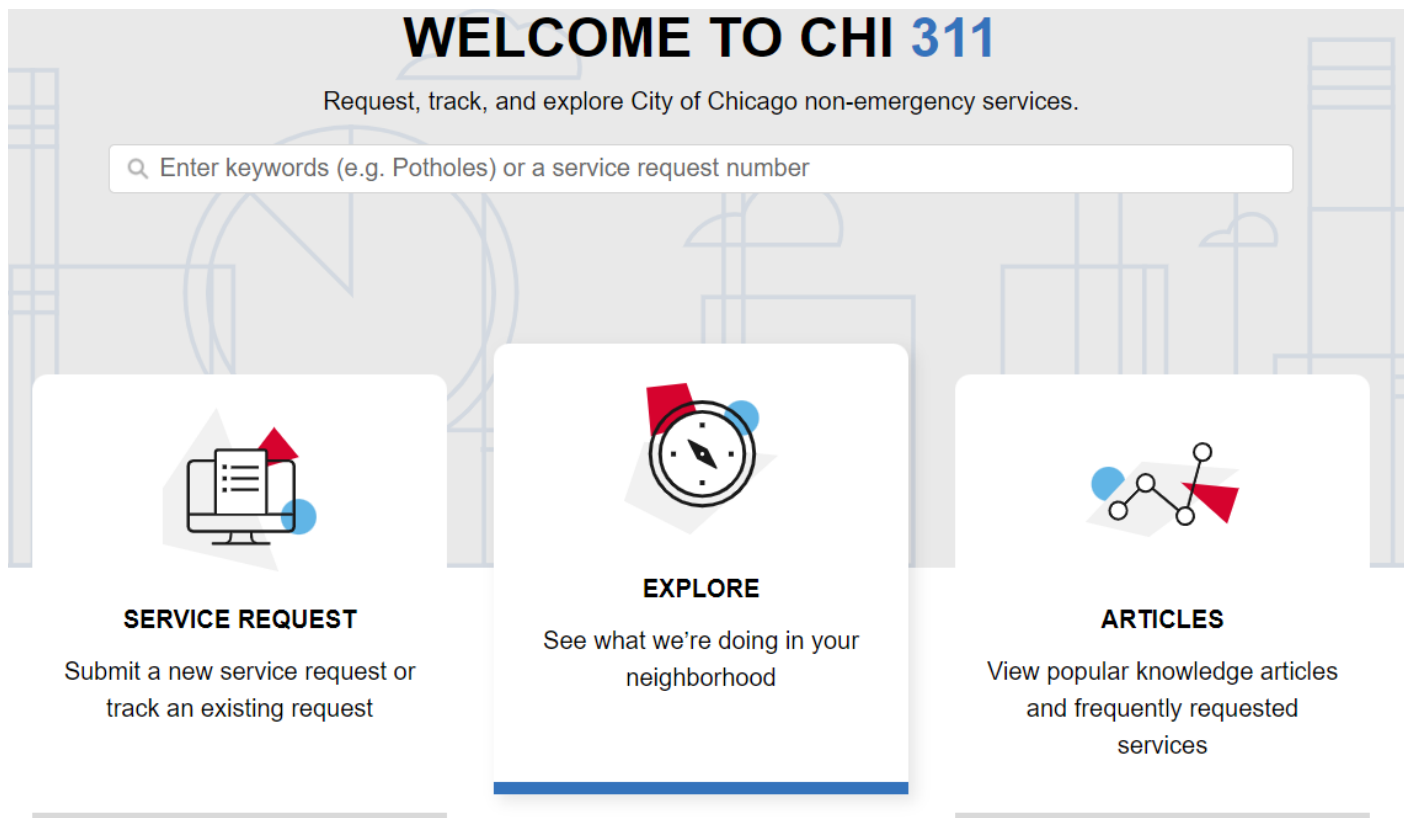
Mission

Leadership

CHI 311

The new [CHI 311](#) system brings openness, innovation and accountability to the delivery of City services. With the new CHI 311 website and mobile app, you can:


- Create new service requests
- Check the status of existing requests and the time it will take to resolve
- Snap a photo and submit it with a request to improve accuracy
- Map requests to help pinpoint a location
- Create an account to track service requests and get local, relevant information
- Provide feedback upon completion
- Search other requests in your neighborhood



WELCOME TO CHI 311


Request, track, and explore City of Chicago non-emergency services.

Q Enter keywords (e.g. Potholes) or a service request number




SERVICE REQUEST

Submit a new service request or track an existing request



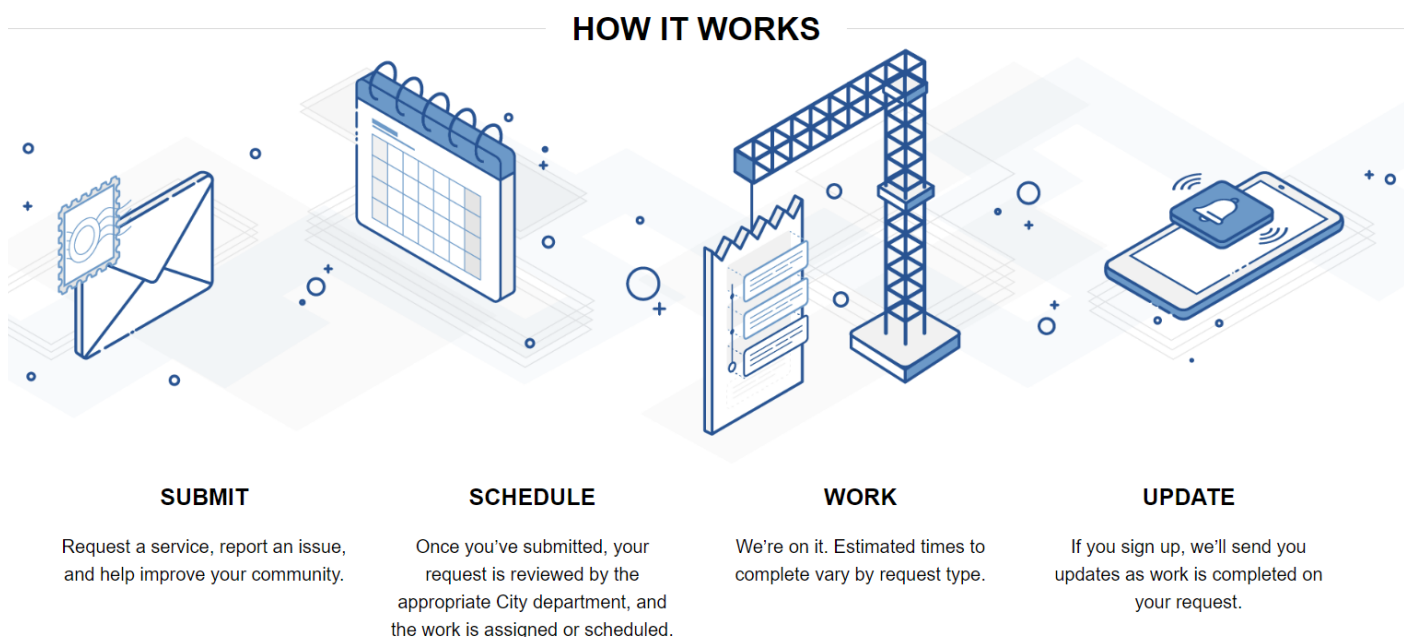
EXPLORE

See what we're doing in your neighborhood




ARTICLES

View popular knowledge articles and frequently requested services




HOW IT WORKS




SUBMIT

Request a service, report an issue, and help improve your community.




SCHEDULE

Once you've submitted, your request is reviewed by the appropriate City department, and the work is assigned or scheduled.



WORK

We're on it. Estimated times to complete vary by request type.

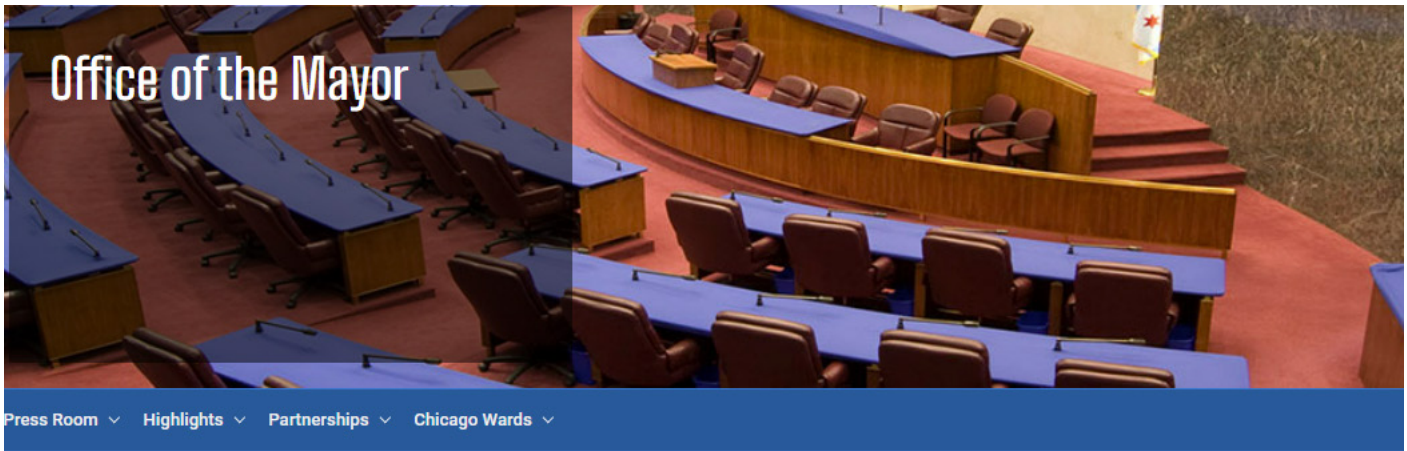


UPDATE

If you sign up, we'll send you updates as work is completed on your request.

Ward and Alderman Look-Up

The Chicago ward and alderman look-up [website](#) gives you information on ward number, Alderman, office address, and the ward phone.



Home / Departments / Office of the Mayor / Find Your Ward and Alderman

Find Your Ward and Alderman

Enter a City of Chicago address (Example: 121 N LaSalle St)

🔍

Found address: 121 N LA SALLE ST

Ward:	42
Alderman:	Reilly, Brendan
Office Address:	121 N. LaSalle St., Room 200
Ward Phone:	312-642-4242



REPORT SOURCES

All information and photos were provided directly from Metra, the Chicago Transit Authority, the Chicago Department of Transportation, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and Center for Neighborhood Technology websites, meetings and social media pages.