

2025 Opening Statement to the Chicago City Council

Chicago Department of Transportation

Tom Carney, Commissioner

Good afternoon, Chairman Ervin and members of the City Council. Thank you for inviting the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) to discuss our work and 2025 budget. My name is Tom Carney, Commissioner of CDOT, and I look forward to answering your questions about our efforts to enhance the quality of life for all Chicagoans through strategic infrastructure improvements.

CDOT manages an extensive network of streets, sidewalks, bridges, alleys, bikeways, traffic signals, and streetlights - connecting every corner of Chicago and reaching every resident. Our mission is to keep this system safe, efficient, and accessible to ensure that people can move smoothly throughout the city, regardless of their destination or mode of travel.

With the strong support of Mayor Johnson, the members of City Council, and fellow City departments and sister agencies, 2024 has been an incredibly productive year, and we're excited to carry that momentum forward into 2025. By the end of this year, CDOT will have:

- Resurfaced 188 miles of residential streets, arterial streets, and alleys
- Installed over 350 blocks of new residential and arterial street lighting
- Completed more than 2,500 sidewalk repairs, and installed over 7,000 ADA sidewalk ramps
- Reconstructed over 50 blocks of alleys through the Menu program, which improves stormwater drainage and mitigates flooding
- Refreshed and installed nearly 350 miles of roadway pavement markings
- Filled more than 354,000 potholes
- Planted more than 5,400 trees along arterial streets, and in medians and boulevards
- And completed over 135,000 work orders in response to service requests from the public across all our divisions.

As all of you know so well, these projects and services are essential to the daily experience of your constituents and the vitality of your wards.

In 2024, we also completed eight major streetscape projects citywide—from Commercial Avenue in South Chicago to Clark and Devon in Rogers Park and Chicago Avenue in Austin, to name a few. More than two dozen additional projects are currently advancing through various stages of outreach, design, procurement, and construction, with many of these set to break ground in 2025.

Streetscape projects are effective in upgrading aging infrastructure with new streets, sidewalks, lighting, and traffic signals, while also incorporating placemaking elements that help turn these corridors into destinations where people want to spend time. The result is a network of inviting, walkable spaces that enhance quality of life and promote economic growth.

Beyond creating inviting public spaces, CDOT is deeply committed to making our streets safer for everyone by reducing serious crashes, and saving lives.

We delivered pedestrian safety improvements at more than 400 locations throughout the city, by integrating safety features into all CDOT construction programs. In addition, CDOT is on track to install over 50 miles of new bikeway projects this year, marking the second consecutive year of record progress.

These investments are creating a safer Chicago for all road users. In 2023, Chicago saw a 27 percent reduction in traffic fatalities from the peak in 2021, compared to a 5 percent reduction nationwide. This downward trend has continued in 2024, with a 13.5 percent reduction in fatal crashes compared to this time last year. We look forward to continued collaboration with City Council to further enhance safety across Chicago's streets.

We are also working closely with our partners at CTA to enhance bus infrastructure, recognizing that the transit experience starts when you leave your front door and ends when you reach your destination. Guided by the Better Streets for Buses plan, we installed over 60 in-lane bus stops and upgraded over 100 stops to improve accessibility in 2024. We also installed key segments of new bus-only lanes along Chicago Avenue.

To help mitigate bus lane traffic, this month we were proud to launch the Smart Streets pilot program with our partners in the Department of Finance to keep these bus lanes working as intended. The pilot program uses camera technology to enforce illegal parking in bus and bike lanes with the aim of improving safety and reducing delays for commuters.

In addition to these initiatives, CDOT has made substantial progress on several major capital projects that are transforming our city's infrastructure. I'd like to highlight some of the key milestones we have reached:

This summer we opened the new Damen Green Line CTA station at Damen and Lake, filling a critical transit gap on the Near West Side. CDOT led the design and construction of the station, which now serves the Kinzie Industrial Corridor, the United Center, Malcolm X College, and the surrounding residential area.

CDOT completed Phase One of our efforts to enhance mobility in and around Jackson Park in support of the Obama Presidential Center. We have added three new pedestrian underpasses, the reconfiguration Hayes Drive between Stony Island Avenue and DLSD, and redesigned Stony Island Avenue, to include new landscaped medians, traffic signals, street lighting, improved bus stops, and safer crossings. Phase Two of the project is coming in Spring 2025 and will include additional roadway work south of 64th Street.

This year we broke ground on a major reconstruction of Milwaukee Avenue from Belmont to Logan Square. This project includes the reconfiguration of Logan Square to increase public space and improve traffic safety, and the creation of a new public plaza adjacent to the Logan Square Blue Line Station.

In 2025 we will break ground on the new State/Lake CTA station that will replace the more than 100-year-old existing structure and modernize the historic transit hub.

From everyday neighborhood services to multi-year capital projects, as well as helping our city host major events such as the DNC, NASCAR, and the Chicago Marathon to name a few, CDOT's work is making Chicago more connected, accessible, and a better place to live and visit.

We have accomplished so much in 2024 in close collaboration with City Council and with the support of Mayor Johnson. We look forward to building on this success to deliver the best possible services to the residents of Chicago next year.

Thank you. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.