



CENTRAL AREA

# Existing Conditions and Trends Report



Issued for Public Comment December 2023

Published May 2024

The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update



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# INTRODUCTION

## The Central Area Existing Conditions and Trends Report is part of the Chicago Department of Planning and Development's (DPD) update to the 2003 Central Area Plan.

The 2024 update is moving forward in two phases. The first phase includes a review of existing conditions, as well as a visioning process that's informed by historic progress, recent trends and community input. The second phase will include the development of implementation strategies and recommendations.

Encompassing the Loop and adjacent neighborhoods, the Central Area is the economic engine of Chicago. It is a major employment center, a place for higher education and innovation, a cultural and tourism destination, the seat of City and County government, and an increasingly attractive home to many residents. The Central Area is also a transportation hub that includes waterfront and open space amenities that are integrated into the city's growing trail system.



Although the Central Area represents just 3% of Chicago's geography, it accounts for 53% of the city's private sector jobs, 45% of the tax base, and 48% of the estimated Gross Regional Product. Population and jobs in the Central Area grew by 95% and 14%, respectively, in the past 20 years. The success of the Central Area has contributed to making Chicago a globally recognized destination and continues to fuel the city's growth and expansion. Many of the elements that make the Central Area what it is today are the result of previous planning and strategic public investments over the last several decades.

Along with other cities around the world, the energy and activity downtown subsided abruptly during the COVID-19 pandemic. More than three years since the beginning of the pandemic, the downtown workplace population remains at about 50% of pre-pandemic levels, as of September 2023, as many workplaces have adopted hybrid work policies. This shift has had substantial impacts on the demand for office, retail and entertainment uses, arts and cultural institutions, and public transportation in the Central Area. During the same period, the Central Area's residential population continued to increase, highlighting the potential for the area's continued growth.

## Previous Central Area Plans



### 2003 CHICAGO CENTRAL AREA PLAN

In 2003, the Chicago Central Area Plan established a vision for downtown growth as a 21st-century global destination. The 2003 Plan envisioned a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use center that provides opportunities to "work, live, play, and celebrate." It noted the need for increased

residential and employment opportunities, enhanced passive and active transit opportunities and infrastructure, and connectivity to green amenities. The 2003 Plan identified project concepts and investment opportunities to achieve the plan's vision.

### 2009 CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN

The 2009 Central Area Action Plan expanded on the 2003 Plan, providing further guidance and structure toward implementation, including a list of key transportation, urban design, waterfront, and open space projects that would help the area achieve its potential. The projects were identified

with the help of a steering committee comprised of businesses and civic leaders, as well as input from three task forces involving economic development and land use; transportation; and urban design, waterfronts and open space.



A look back on this progress is provided in the [Appendix: Looking Back, Implementation Status from 2003 and 2009 Central Area Plan and Action Plan](#).



### 2021 CENTRAL AREA RECOVERY ROADMAP

The 2021 Central Area Recovery Roadmap was led by DPD and the Chicago Central Area Committee to provide downtown revitalization strategies in the wake of COVID-19. Informed by a multi-disciplinary task force,

road map recommendations involved four action-oriented themes to amplify a safe and rapid recovery; intensify civic and public life; maximize workers, residents and visitors; and plan for capital projects and services.



## 2024 Central Area Plan Update Phases

### Phase 1

This first phase of the Central Area Update includes:



**Tracking and reporting** on projects from the 2003 Plan and 2009 Action Plan



**Crafting a Central Area vision and creating a scope of work** for the second phase



**Analyzing existing conditions and trends** in the Central Area



**Hosting a final public meeting** to present the vision and obtain feedback



**Engaging the community** through two rounds of focus groups, a community survey, a youth survey, a webinar, a public open house, and eight pop-ups at neighborhood events

### Phase 2

The second phase will involve:



**Continuing community engagement**



**Identify recommendations** and implementation strategies



**Study development scenarios** for focus areas



**Draft the Updated Central Area Plan**

### 2023 CITYWIDE FRAMEWORK PLAN (WE WILL CHICAGO)

The 2023 citywide framework plan (We Will Chicago) focused on identifying goals and objectives to improve the livability of Chicago's neighborhoods, including the multiple neighborhoods within the Central Area. With overarching goals to enhance equity and resiliency

citywide after decades of West and South Side disinvestment, the citywide plan's strategies were organized around eight planning "pillars" that are being replicated in the Central Area Update, along with an additional pillar focused on land use.



Pillars:

ARTS & CULTURE	HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS
CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	LIFELONG LEARNING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY
ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY	TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
LAND USE	◀ ADDITIONAL CATEGORY FOR CENTRAL AREA PLAN UPDATE



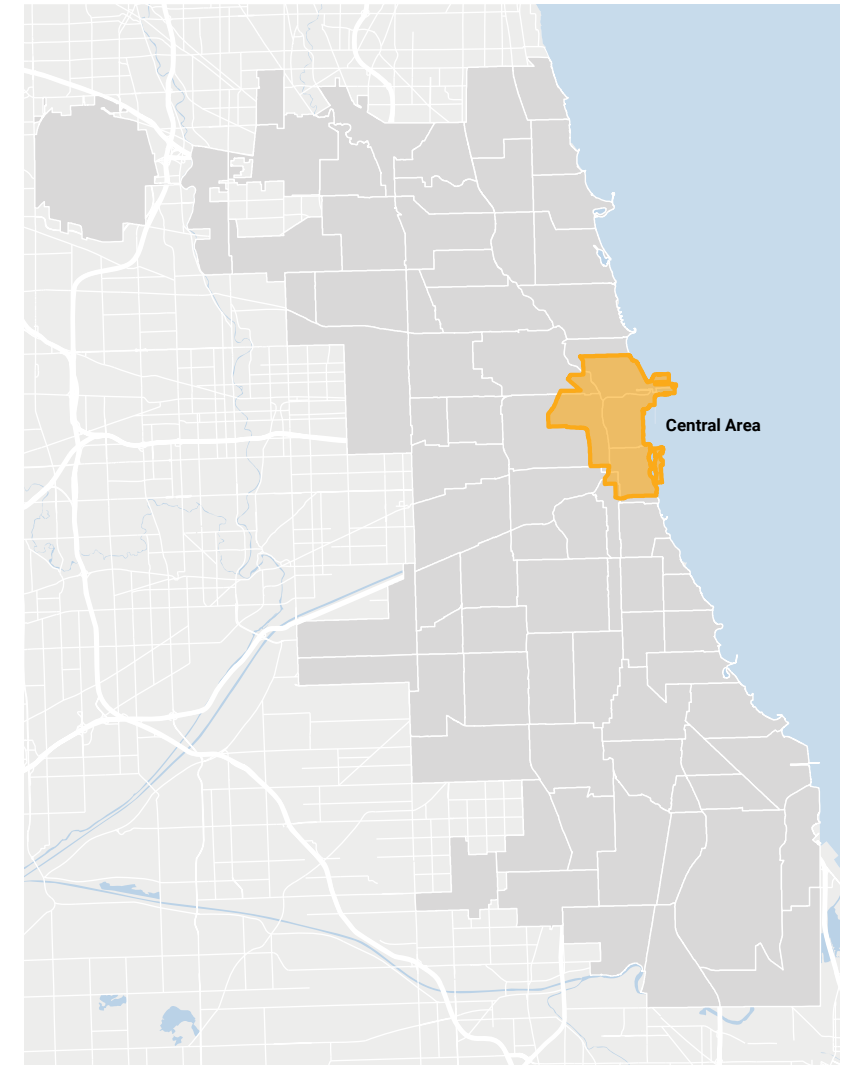
# CENTRAL AREA OVERVIEW



The Central Area encompasses the Loop and significant portions of the Near South Side, Near West Side and Near North Side community areas, as well as small portions of Armour Square and West Town.

The Central Area contains the densest parts of the city with a variety of residential, business, institutional and cultural uses. Like many downtowns, Chicago's Central Area continues to face ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, including vacant storefronts and fewer weekday commuters coming into the area to work.

With nearly 625,000 private sector jobs, Chicago's downtown is the economic engine of the city. It is also one of the most active growth areas of the city, adding more than 87,000 residents and 75,000 jobs in the last two decades.



	CENTRAL AREA	SHARE OF CITY
Acres	4,756	3%
Residents (2020)	181,751	7%
Private Sector Jobs (2020)	623,504	53%

Source: 2020 Decennial Census, City of Chicago, Esri, Illinois Department of Employment Security (2022), SB Friedman

Downtown District Zip Codes: 60601, 60602, 60603, 60604, 60605, 60606, 60607, 60610, 60611, 60616, 60654, 60661



## Land Acknowledgement

Chicago is located on land that is and has long been a center for Native peoples.

The area is the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe, or the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Nations consider this area their traditional homeland, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo and Mascouten. The City specifically acknowledges the contributions of Kitihawa of the Potawatomi in fostering the community that has become Chicago.



## Central Area Boundary

The Central Area's boundary has evolved over time.

The 2003 Plan study area was generally bounded by Division Street, Halsted Street, 25th Street and Lake Michigan. Given the area's role as a center of regional importance, much of this area was subsequently included

in a new Downtown (D) zoning district designation that recognizes the area's role as a center of regional importance. Following expansions in 2016 and 2017, the D zoning district is today generally bounded by Division Street, Ashland Avenue,

25th Street/Interstate-55, and Lake Michigan. This document refers to the Central Area, the Downtown zoning district (**Downtown District**), and downtown Chicago interchangeably, unless otherwise noted.



PILLAR 1

# Civic & Community Engagement

The  
**CENTRAL  
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Update





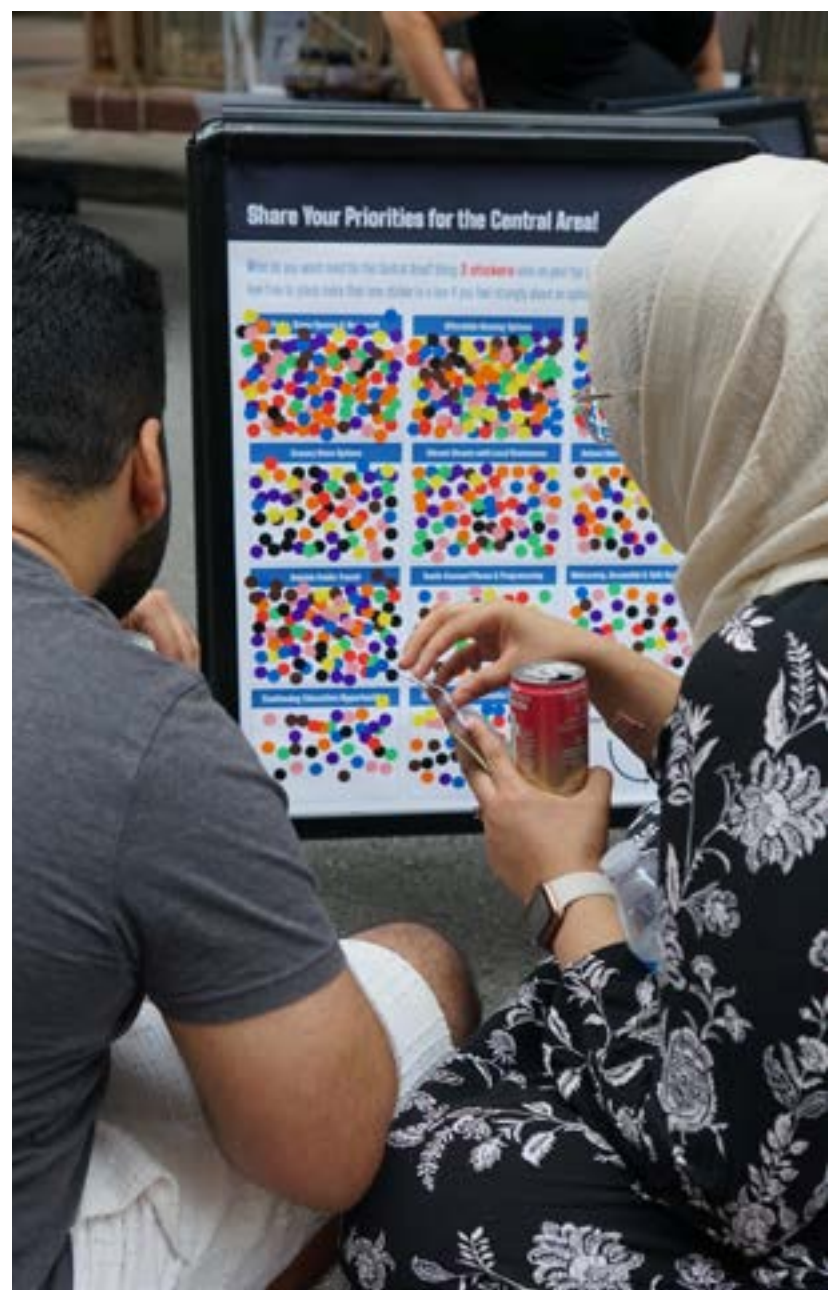


# CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The first phase of the two-year planning process for the Central Area Plan Update involves direct and open engagement with community members and local leaders to establish a vision for the future of the area.

The engagement strategy is built upon previous and ongoing neighborhood planning and investment initiatives. It also taps into local partners and provides the public with multiple visioning opportunities including surveys, public meetings, community events and other activities.



## Focus Groups

More than 160 individuals from across the city convened at a series of virtual meetings in early 2023 to help develop a collective vision for the Central Area rooted in equity and resiliency.

Focus groups were organized by pillars. The groups met again in the fall of 2023 to provide feedback on draft vision statements and set the foundation for the second phase of work.

## Virtual Kick-Off Event

More than 300 community members participated in a virtual kick-off on April 27, 2023, which featured DPD officials and members of the consultant team.

The webinar included a discussion around project goals, timing, existing conditions, historic trends and interactive visioning exercises.



## Community-Wide Survey

From April to September 2023, Chicago residents and visitors were invited to take a 10-minute survey about their experiences downtown.

There were approximately 2,740 respondents. This public feedback will be used to help shape the updated vision for the Central Area and the recommendations that will be developed in 2024 for the Central Area Plan Update.

## Open House

The City hosted an open house on May 23, 2023, at Harold Washington Library. More than 200 community members attended and shared their thoughts around the future of downtown.



## Community Partners + Pop-Ups

To help engage Chicagoans who work or reside outside of the Central Area, pop-up events were held citywide from June through August 2023 with the help of neighborhood partners.

**6/24, Taste of Chicago – Humboldt Park**  
(~200 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**7/15, Taste of Chicago – Pullman Park**  
(~114 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**7/27, Austin Town Hall City Market**  
(~155 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**7/29, Chicago Chinatown Community Foundation Summer Fair**  
(~230 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**7/30, Hyde Park Silver Room Block Party**  
(~50 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**8/09, Uptown Farmers Market**  
(~85 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**8/13, Sundays on State**  
(~890 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

**8/26, 27th Ward Back to School Fest**  
(~60 BOARD ACTIVITY PARTICIPANTS)

## Youth Engagement

To ensure engagement included youth voices, a focus group was held with the Mayor’s Youth Commission to solicit thoughts on where teens and young adults spend time downtown and opportunities for the future.

A standalone youth survey was publicized on social media by community partners with large youth followings to increase awareness and participation. There were approximately 1,500 youth responses.



## Final Phase 1 Open House

A second open house was hosted by the City on December 6, 2023.

More than 100 participants attended and provided feedback on draft vision statements that were produced after gathering existing conditions data and trends and through multiple community engagement activities throughout 2023. These visioning statements and priorities will serve as a roadmap for the specific goals and strategies that we will collectively develop for the formal plan in 2024.

PILLAR 2

# Arts & Culture



The  
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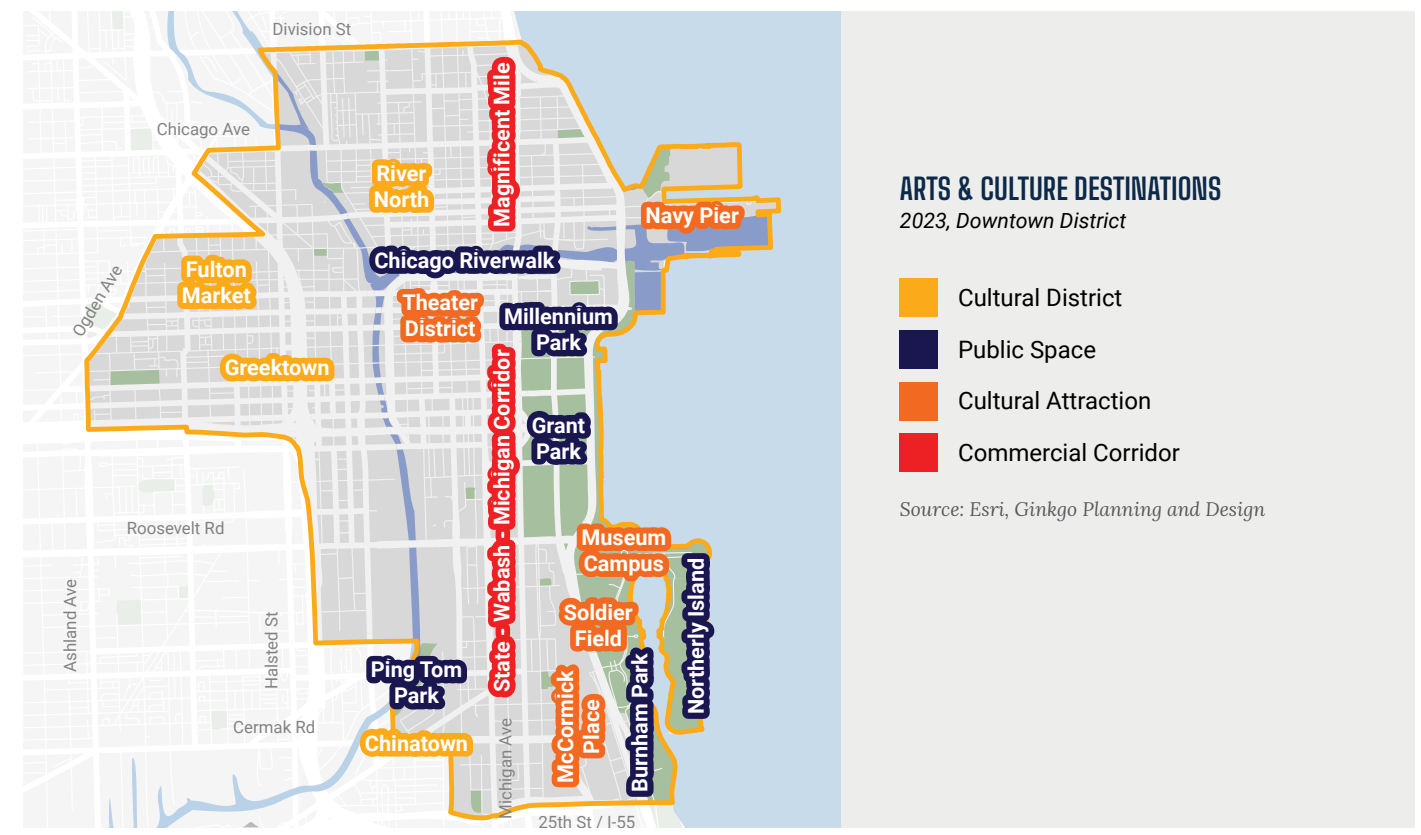


# ARTS & CULTURE

Chicago's Central Area is home to world-class museums; literary, visual, and performing arts centers; cultural districts filled with unique retail and entertainment venues; centers for higher education in the arts; and an exciting dining scene.

Many of these arts and entertainment venues are located within downtown's Lake Michigan waterfront, award-winning Riverwalk, and other lively public spaces surrounded by Chicago's iconic architecture,

which help to make the Central Area an exciting cultural experience. Chicago has been voted as the favorite big city destination in the nation seven years in a row by Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Awards.



## ASSETS

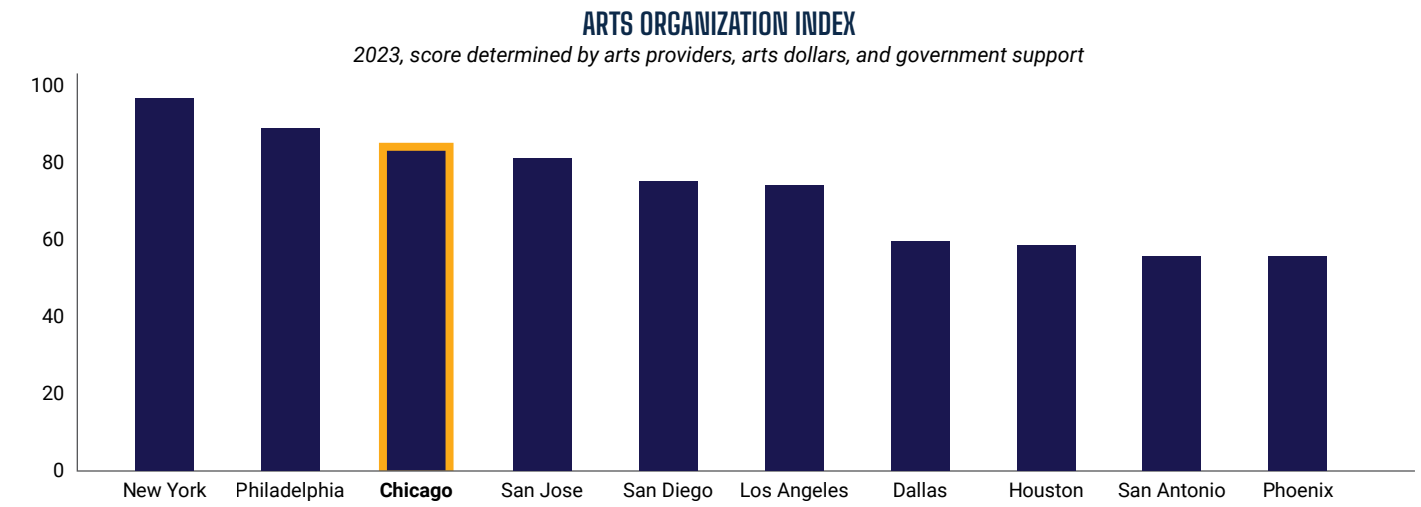
### Top Creative City

Chicago is the top U.S. city for creatives and fourth in the world, according to a 2023 study by Business Name Generator, which considered a variety of metrics including estimated number of creative roles available, average yearly salaries advertised, cost of living as a single person excluding rent, and number of museums and art galleries.



Photo credit: Abel Arciniega, Choose Chicago

Cook County, which encompasses the city of Chicago, scores better than 85% of counties nationwide on the number of arts organizations per capita, according to SMU DataArts. Only the counties in which New York and Philadelphia are located perform higher on this metric in comparison to the counties of the top 10 largest downtowns in the country. A high concentration of Chicago's arts and culture organizations are headquartered in the Central Area with 14% of these entities located in one downtown ward.



Source: SMU DataArts (2022), SB Friedman  
Data is for the county in which the city is located.





## Performing Arts

A 2019 Chicago Loop Alliance study found that after New York City's Broadway/Times Square, no other arts district in the country came close to the Loop in size, depth of offerings and participation.

With 11 major performing arts venues, many smaller venues and more than 34,500 seats, Chicago's Central Area attracts artists, residents and visitors alike to world-class productions and premieres. Offerings include theatre, music, dance, circus arts, spoken word, comedy and more. According to the Chicago Loop Alliance "Arts in the Loop Economic Impact Study," in 2018, arts and culture in the Loop generated \$2.25 billion in economic activity. This economic activity results from performance spaces, museums, galleries, other cultural offerings and arts organizations' office locations.

- THEATER.** Broadway productions in Chicago are staged in five historic downtown theaters—the Cadillac Palace, the James M. Nederlander, the CIBC, the Broadway Playhouse at Water Tower Place and the Auditorium Theater. The Goodman, Chicago's oldest and largest non-profit theater, and Lookingglass are both Tony-award winning theaters. Reflecting the importance of theater to Chicagoans, the February 2023 Theatre Week, which included venues throughout the city, sold a record-breaking 20,650 tickets, beating the previous record of 13,400 tickets and resulting in a week-long festival extension.



- MUSIC.** Chicago is the birthplace of house and gospel music, urban blues and modern jazz, and the Central Area is home to several notable venues critical to their emergence, including two Chicago Landmarks: Chess Records and The Warehouse. Chicago's rich musical heritage is reflected in the diversity of musical offerings downtown — at venues like

the Chicago Theatre, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Symphony Center and Pritzker Pavilion, as well as at music festivals in downtown parks, such as the Blues Festival and Lollapalooza. In 2022, the four-day Lollapalooza festival at Grant Park brought more than 150 musical artists across all genres to the city and attracted more than 100,000 attendees per day.

- DANCE.** The Central Area is also home to several renowned dance companies, including the Joffrey Ballet and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. Columbia College Chicago has provided dance education for more than 40 years and

hosts performances at The Dance Center. Each year, the Chicago SummerDance series provides opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in introductory

dance lessons by professional instructors and then enjoy live music and dancing. SummerDance is held in Grant Park and other locations citywide.

## Museums

Many of Chicago's world-renowned museums are downtown, providing immersive experiences across a wide range of subjects including art, architecture, history and science.

The Art Institute of Chicago is one of the largest and oldest art museums in the country. The Museum of Contemporary Art hosts performances and educational programs, in addition to modern art exhibitions.

The American Writers Museum is dedicated to writers and their works, ranging from poetry and drama to journalism.

The Museum Campus includes the Shedd Aquarium, Field Museum and Adler Planetarium. The Museum Campus also includes Northerly Island, a performance venue with a 30,000-seat outdoor amphitheater, and

the 65,000-seat Soldier Field. Soldier Field is home to the Chicago Bears National Football League team, Chicago Fire Major League Soccer team, and hosts concerts and events throughout the year. The Chicago Bears are evaluating their options while continuing to play in Soldier Field under the terms of a lease that is set to expire in 2033.





## Public Art

Public art offers opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to engage with art as they move through the downtown.

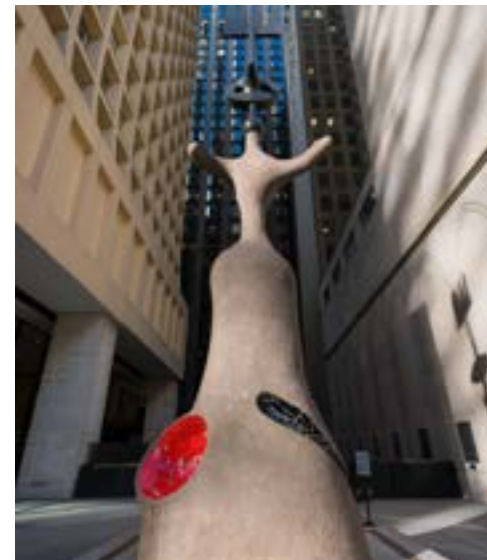
Artworks include sculptures, monuments, mosaics and installations, both outdoors and within public facilities like libraries and transit and police stations. Downtown Chicago is

home to more than 100 notable public artworks, including the untitled sculpture commonly known as "The Picasso" by Pablo Picasso, The Four Seasons by Marc Chagall and Cloud Gate (also known as The Bean) by Anish Kapoor. ART on THE MART is one of the world's largest digital art platforms that transforms

the 2.5-acre south façade of Merchandise Mart into a larger-than-life canvas. Cutting-edge video-mapping techniques are utilized to project moving digital images by renowned local, national and international artists. ART on THE MART is visible from the Riverwalk and Wacker Drive.



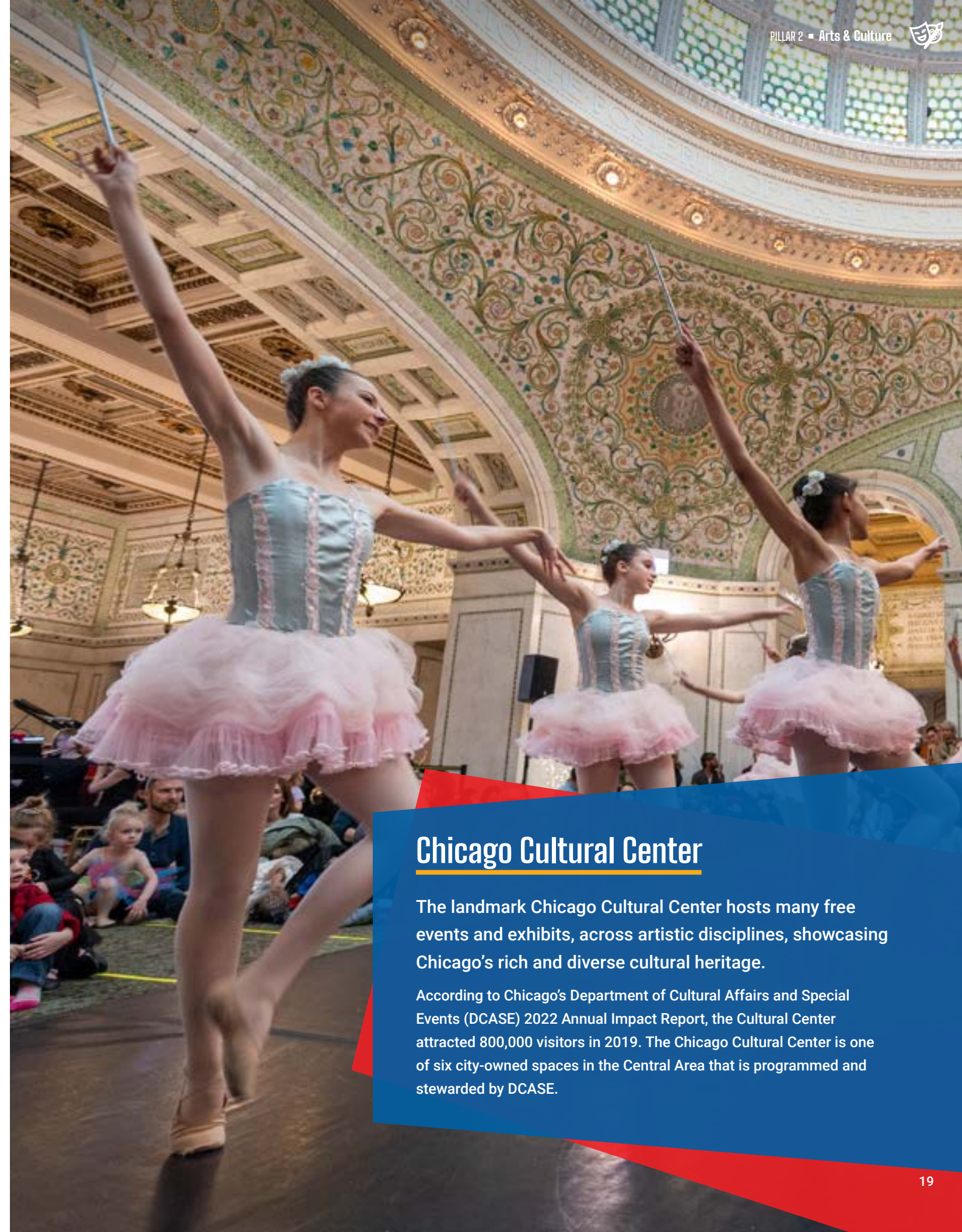
Photo credit: Jeff Carrion, DePaul University



## Television and Film

A long list of memorable movies has been filmed in the Central Area, including "Ferris Bueller's Day Off", "The Dark Knight", "Transformers: Dark of the Moon" and "The Batman".

In recent years, Chicago has also become a center for successful TV series including "Chicago Fire", "Chicago PD", "Chicago Med", "The Chi" and "The Bear". In 2022, there were six movies and 13 TV shows filmed in various parts of the city including the Central Area.



### Chicago Cultural Center

The landmark Chicago Cultural Center hosts many free events and exhibits, across artistic disciplines, showcasing Chicago's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

According to Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) 2022 Annual Impact Report, the Cultural Center attracted 800,000 visitors in 2019. The Chicago Cultural Center is one of six city-owned spaces in the Central Area that is programmed and stewarded by DCASE.





## Investments in Chicago's Cultural Vibrancy

Over the past two decades, the City of Chicago has made significant capital investments that have had transformative impacts on Chicago's cultural vibrancy.

These include:

- **MILLENNIUM PARK.** Completed in 2004, Millennium Park transformed an underutilized railyard and parking lot into one of the most visited parks in the nation. Encompassing nearly 25 acres, the park includes the Pritzker Pavilion, Lurie Garden and the Cloud Gate or "the Bean" by sculptor Anish Kapoor, and Crown Fountain, designed by artist Jaume Plensa. In 2022, nearly 20 million people visited Millennium Park.
- **CHICAGO RIVERWALK.** The 1.25-mile-long award-winning Riverwalk along the main branch of the Chicago River features art, dining, entertainment, and recreation



Photo credit: Andrea Chubb, Navy Pier

options and unique views of downtown architecture.

- **NAVY PIER.** One of Chicago's top attractions, Navy Pier recently celebrated its centennial with hundreds of millions of dollars invested in upgrades, including new stages and improvements

to the entrance park, food court and Ferris wheel. The Chicago Shakespeare Theater stages as many as 20 productions and more than 600 performances annually on the Pier, which averages about nine million visitors every year.

## Special Events

The Central Area celebrates the arts throughout the year with a variety of special events. 539 special events permits were issued citywide by the City of Chicago in 2022, with many of the city's largest special events occurring downtown.

Examples of these larger special events include:

- **TASTE OF CHICAGO,** a favorite summertime tradition for more than 40 years, brings together restaurants from around the city, creating an opportunity to sample Chicago's culinary diversity in a big food festival in Grant Park. In 2022, the Taste of Chicago attracted

more than 150,000 people to sample offerings from 33 local food vendors, and view or participate in 40 performances, including dance lessons and family activities.

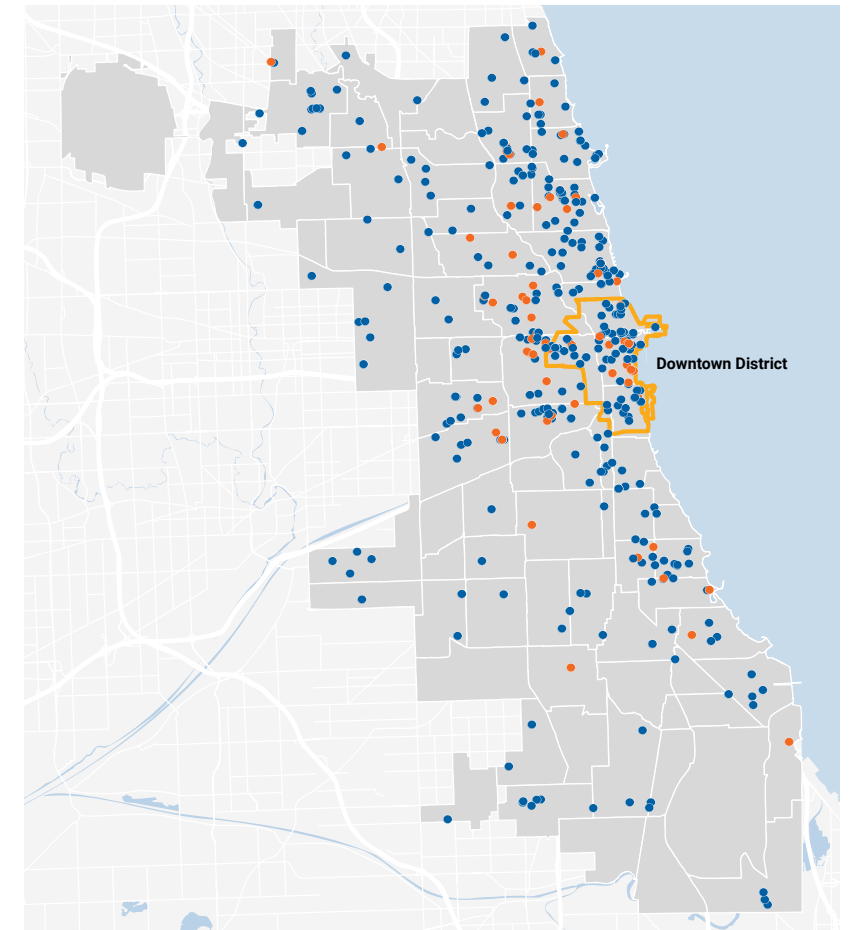
- **SUNDAYS ON STATE,** Chicago's biggest block party closes the iconic State Street in downtown Chicago to vehicular traffic on select

Sundays every summer. In 2023, more than 350 vendors participated in the two Sundays on State events, programming the street with hundreds of activations, including food, drink, shopping, and entertainment. More than 250,000 people, representing every single ZIP code in the city and beyond, attended the 2023 Sundays on State.

## Culinary Experiences

With award-winning restaurants and local mom-and-pop favorites downtown, Chicago provides a diversity of food options for residents and food enthusiasts.

Fulton Market and the Near North neighborhood are hotspots for creative restaurants and fine dining.



### APPROVED SPECIAL EVENTS PERMITS

2022

- Events with 10,000 or more anticipated attendees
- Events with fewer than 10,000 anticipated attendees

Source: Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, SB Friedman

**TASTE OF CHICAGO**  
ATTENDANCE (2023)  
120,000 People



**CHICAGO MARATHON**  
ATTENDANCE (2023)  
47,000 Participants  
1.7M Spectators



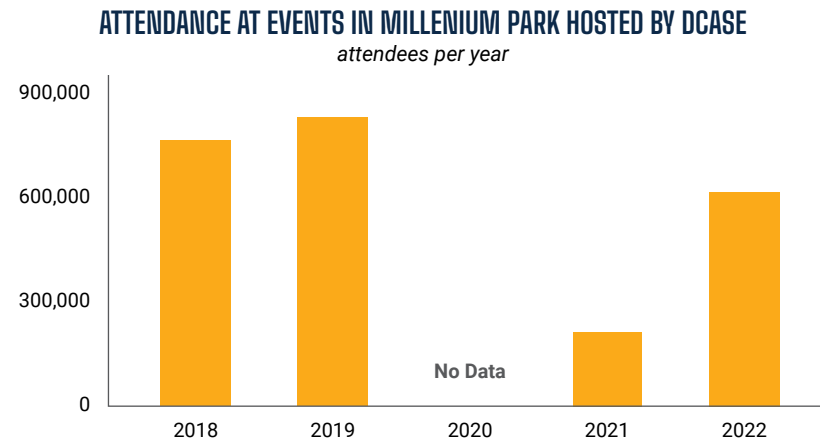
## CHALLENGES

### Decline in Attendance Levels

Since its onset in March 2020, the pandemic drastically reduced the number of in-person events and attendees downtown.

While audiences have increased since the height of the pandemic, overall attendance at arts and entertainment venues have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.

In 2019, more than 800,000 people attended public events including Blues, Gospel, House and Jazz Festivals, Summer Sounds, and Movies in the Park, hosted by DCASE in Millennium Park. Attendance at these events in 2022 was just over 600,000, which is approximately 75% of 2019 levels.



Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman  
Aggregated Millennium Park/Downtown Festival Attendance excluding Lollapalooza, Taste of Chicago, and Chicago Marathon

Navy Pier attendance in 2022 returned to 83% of the 2019 level after a significant dip during the early years of the pandemic. According to a March 2023 Crain’s article (“Chicago’s Cultural

Comeback is Falling Short”), attendance at Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Goodman Theater, two leading performing arts venues, was running 15–20% below pre-pandemic levels.



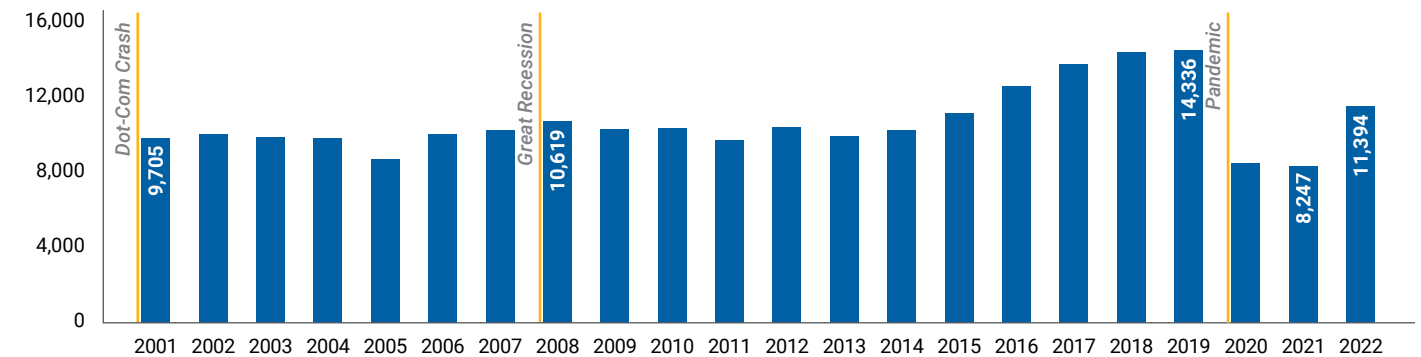
### Job Losses

In 2019, there were more than 14,000 private sector jobs in the arts, entertainment and recreation economic sector in ZIP codes that overlap the Central Area.

The pandemic resulted in a loss of more than 5,000 jobs by 2021. Jobs started to recover in 2022, rising to more than 11,000 private jobs or 80% of pre-pandemic levels, not counting self-employed, gig, public and freelance workers in arts and

entertainment. In addition to jobs directly related to the arts, there are several supporting sectors such as hotel, retail and service establishments that have been negatively impacted and are not included in this jobs estimate.

ARTS JOB GROWTH IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT new jobs by year



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, SB Friedman. Downtown District Zip Codes: 60601, 60602, 60603, 60604, 60605, 60606, 60607, 60610, 60611, 60616, 60654, 60661

### Funding Shortfalls

Declining attendance, stagnant private donations, and increased costs due to inflationary pressures, have resulted in a significant funding shortfall for arts, cultural and entertainment organizations in Chicago and elsewhere.

Pandemic-related government relief funding provided a temporary lifeline, but as these grants run out and ticket revenues continue to lag, arts organizations will face new challenges.



## KEY INITIATIVES

### Transformative Public Investment in Arts and Culture

In 2022, DCASE increased direct grant support to the arts sector from \$2.7 million to \$12.7 million, providing grants for general operating support to non-profit organizations and direct support to individual artists.

As part of the 2023 Chicago Presents program, which supports free arts programming for large-scale indoor and outdoor events around the city, DCASE launched the Chicago Presents Loop Program. This initiative aims

to support arts programming downtown as a strategy to complement recovery and revitalization efforts.

### Neighborhood Connections

DCASE is working to create neighborhood offshoots of successful downtown festivals and events.

For example, Taste of Chicago was celebrated in the Austin, Pullman and Little Village neighborhoods in 2023. The Millennium Park Residency Program is intended to deeply embed Chicago-based organizations and cultural producers within the fabric of Millennium Park and to encourage site-specific programs that engage new and diverse audiences from around the city. In addition, DCASE awarded \$5.5 million to Choose Chicago to expand neighborhood tourism initiatives over a three-year period.



## PILLAR 3

# Economic Development

The  
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Update







# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chicago's status as a global city that attracts businesses, investment and talent from across the world is largely due to its Central Area, which continues to fuel its growth and vitality.

Downtown employment has rebounded to near pre-pandemic levels and area hotels are posting record occupancy levels, indicating a resurgence of tourism. However, work from home has become a new normal

for many office workers, resulting in a depressed demand for office space downtown. Remote work combined with online shopping has also impacted retail and restaurant liveliness downtown.

## ASSETS

### Business and Talent Destination

For the 10th year in a row, Site Selection magazine ranked the Chicago region as the country's top destination for corporate relocations and expansions in 2022, when 180 companies relocated to Chicago or expanded their footprint in the city, according to World Business Chicago (WBC).

Chicago's success as a business destination is driven by its world-class quality of life, deep and diverse talent pool and relatively affordable cost of living.

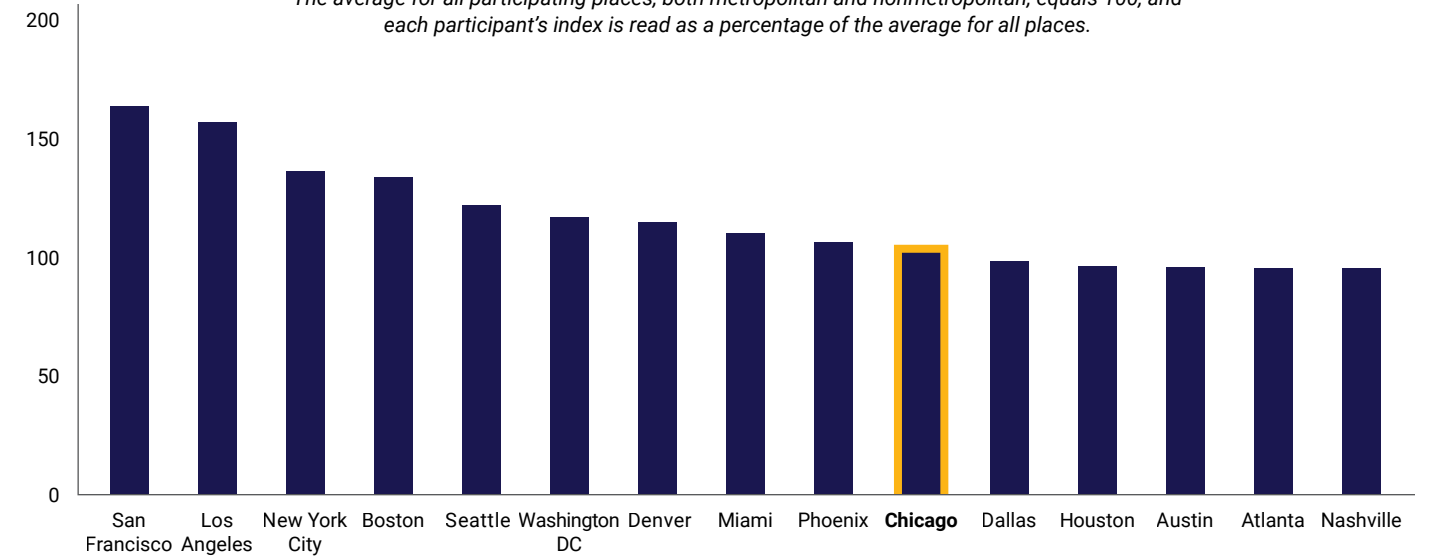
Thirty-one Fortune 500 companies are located in the Chicago region, the highest concentration of Fortune 500 companies outside of New York City. In 2022, 12 of these companies were headquartered downtown, representing a diverse range of industries such as real estate, food service, food

production, utilities, and network and communications equipment.

There are more than 31,000 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in institutions of higher learning with main campuses in the Central Area. These students, as well as the more than 400,000 students enrolled at post-secondary educational and training institutions in the Chicago area, offer downtown employers access to a highly educated and diverse talent pool.

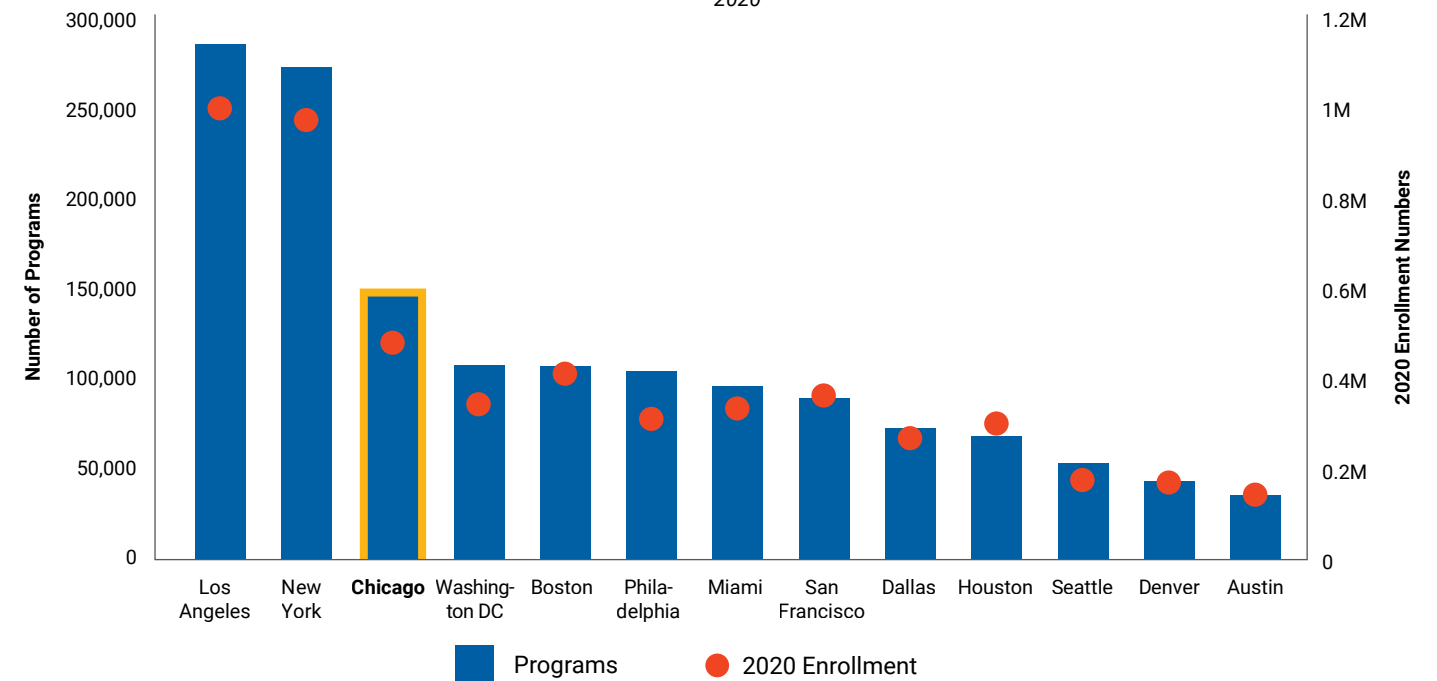
### COST OF LIVING (COL) INDEX BY METRO AREA

2022, COL measures relative price levels for consumer goods and services in participating areas. The average for all participating places, both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan, equals 100, and each participant's index is read as a percentage of the average for all places.



Source: World Business Chicago, C2ER

### ENROLLMENT & PROGRAMS COMPLETED BY METRO AREA 2020



Source: World Business Chicago, Lightcast

Program completions include both degree-awarding and non-degree awarding programs.

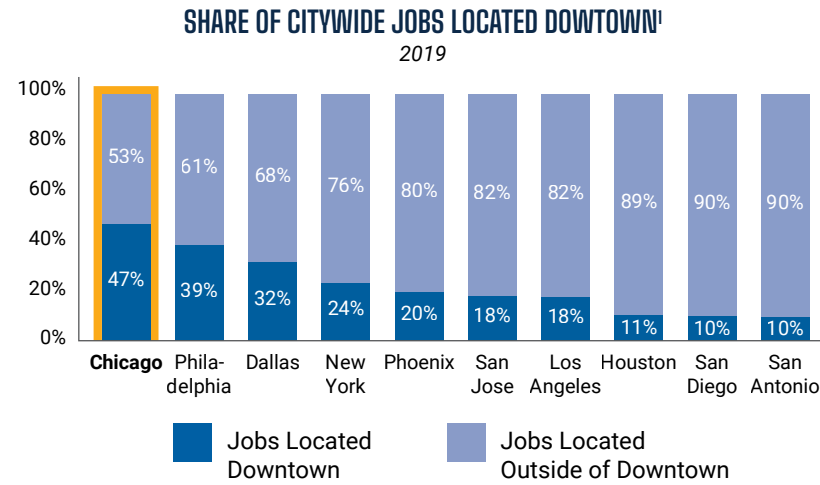


# Downtown Job Growth

Chicago's downtown, as defined in this report as the Downtown zoning district, includes 53% of the City's private sector jobs.

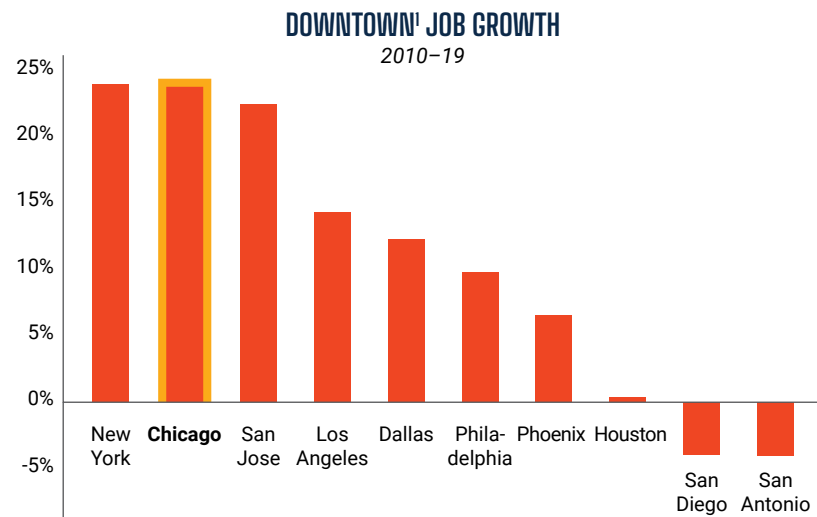
This high concentration of downtown jobs is similarly reflected in a Brookings Institute report which applied a slightly different study boundary yet still attributed 47% of the city's total private sector jobs to the downtown. The findings of the report also show Chicago's downtown jobs total is 8% higher than the city with the next highest share downtown (Philadelphia, 39%). Between 2010 and 2019, the number of jobs in downtown Chicago grew by 25%; only New York City matched this level of growth.

Since 2001, private sector jobs in downtown ZIP codes grew from 550,000 to 625,000. The growth was driven by multiple economic sectors, reflecting the diversity of the area's economic base. The two largest growth sectors were healthcare and social assistance, and professional, scientific & technology services with more than 32,000 new jobs added in each sector. Six additional economic sectors added more than 1,000 jobs each.



Source: LEHD, SB Friedman

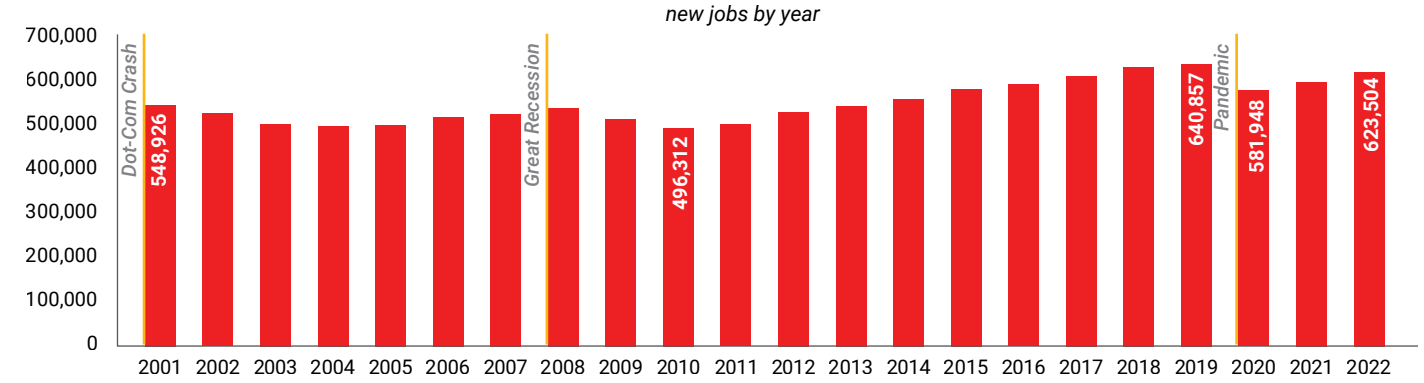
1. Downtown is defined as the original Central Business District (CBD) identified in the 1982 Census of Retail Trade as well as all 2020 census tracts that share a boundary with the 1982 CBD geography.



Source: LEHD, SB Friedman

1. Downtown is defined as the original Central Business District (CBD) identified in the 1982 Census of Retail Trade as well as all 2020 census tracts that share a boundary with the 1982 CBD geography.

## PRIVATE JOB GROWTH IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, SB Friedman. Downtown District Zip Codes: 60601, 60602, 60603, 60604, 60605, 60606, 60607, 60610, 60611, 60616, 60654, 60661

## JOB GROWTH BY SECTOR 2001-22, Downtown District

SECTOR	2001 JOBS	2022 JOBS	2001-2022 CHANGE	2001-2022 CAGR (COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE)
Health Care & Social Assistance (NAICS sector 62)	33,291	67,036	33,745	3.4%
Professional, Scientific & Tech. Svcs. (54)	118,661	150,721	32,060	1.1%
Admin. & Sup. & Waste Mgmt. & Remed. Svcs. (56)	50,222	61,697	11,475	1.0%
Accommodations & Food Services (72)	43,853	50,930	7,077	0.7%
Educational Services (61)	14,383	20,099	5,716	1.6%
Mngmt. of Companies & Enterprises (55)	9,425	12,925	3,500	1.5%
Transportation & Warehousing (48-49)	9,332	12,393	3,061	1.4%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (71)	9,705	11,394	1,689	0.8%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing (53)	17,492	18,201	709	0.2%
Wholesale Trade (42)	13,801	13,984	183	0.1%
Other Services (Except Public Admin.) (81)	29,376	28,349	-1,027	-0.2%
Information (51)	33,896	32,816	-1,080	-0.2%
Other - Unclassified (99), Mining (21), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting (11)	1,308	55	-1,253	-14.0%
Construction (23)	8,290	7,024	-1,266	-0.8%
Utilities (22)	3,918	1,831	-2,087	-3.6%
Retail Trade (44-45)	28,983	25,629	-3,354	-0.6%
Finance & Insurance (52)	105,635	98,617	-7,018	-0.3%
Manufacturing (31-33)	16,875	9,761	-7,114	-2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>548,926</b>	<b>623,504</b>	<b>74,578</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, SB Friedman. Downtown District Zip Codes: 60601, 60602, 60603, 60604, 60605, 60606, 60607, 60610, 60611, 60616, 60654, 60661



## Diverse Economic Base

No single industry represents more than 13% of the Chicago area’s overall economy.

Similarly, the composition of the downtown economic base continues to diversify due to the expanded presence of the following sectors:

- **LIFE SCIENCES:** The Chicago region ranks seventh on CBRE’s list of top 25 life sciences employment clusters. Modern bio-tech lab space concentrated in Chicago’s Central Area rents at just half the cost in New York City and two-thirds the cost in Boston, providing a significant competitive advantage to life science companies.
- **FINANCE/FINTECH:** The Chicago region is a major financial center, the fourth highest in the country by number of employees in related occupations. The Loop, with more than 45% of finance firms in the region, continues to serve as the region’s center for finance and fintech, the integration of technology and financial services.
- **BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:** Management consulting, law, advertising, accounting, architecture and engineering companies under the Professional Scientific and Technical Services Sector reflect the “knowledge economy.” This sector accounts for 25% of all private sector jobs downtown, the largest concentration of all the priority industries within the Central Area.



- **MANUFACTURING:** With nearly \$100 billion in annual economic output (a measure of economic activity) in 2022, the Chicago metro has the second largest manufacturing ecosystem in the nation. While the Central Area has few manufacturing facilities, it is home to an increasing number of corporate innovation centers including Bosch’s Chicago Connector and John Deere’s new information technology office in Fulton Market.
- **FOOD INNOVATION AND MANUFACTURING:** Chicago’s food innovation ecosystem is supported by many incubators such as the Hatchery, the Food Foundry, and FoodLab Chicago. Additionally, several corporate innovation centers such as Accenture’s the Extract,

the Conagra Brands Center for Food Design, the Mars Wrigley Global Innovation Center and the Kraft Heinz R&D Center are located in and around the Central Area.

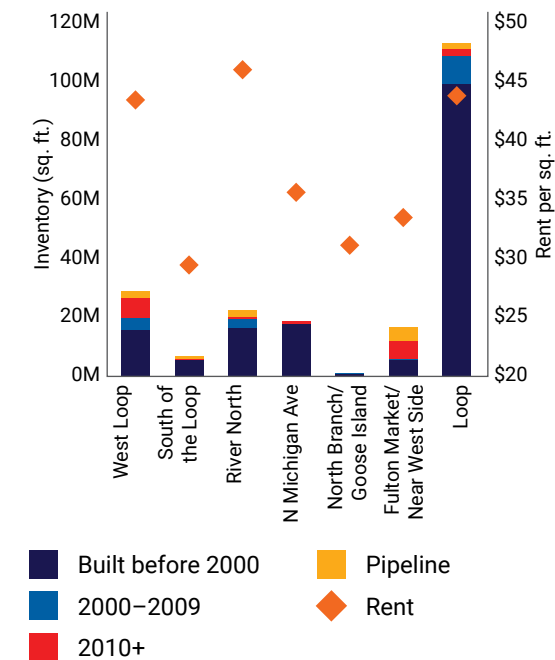
- **TRANSPORTATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND LOGISTICS (TDL) AND LOGISTICS TECH:** With six of the nation’s seven Class I railroads, 10 interstate highways, two international airports and over 100 miles of navigable waterways, the Chicago region is the epicenter of the nation’s transportation network. The Central Area is home to a growing number of programs focused on developing supply chain and logistics technologies, including 1871’s Supply Chain Innovation Lab.

## Large Concentration of Office Space

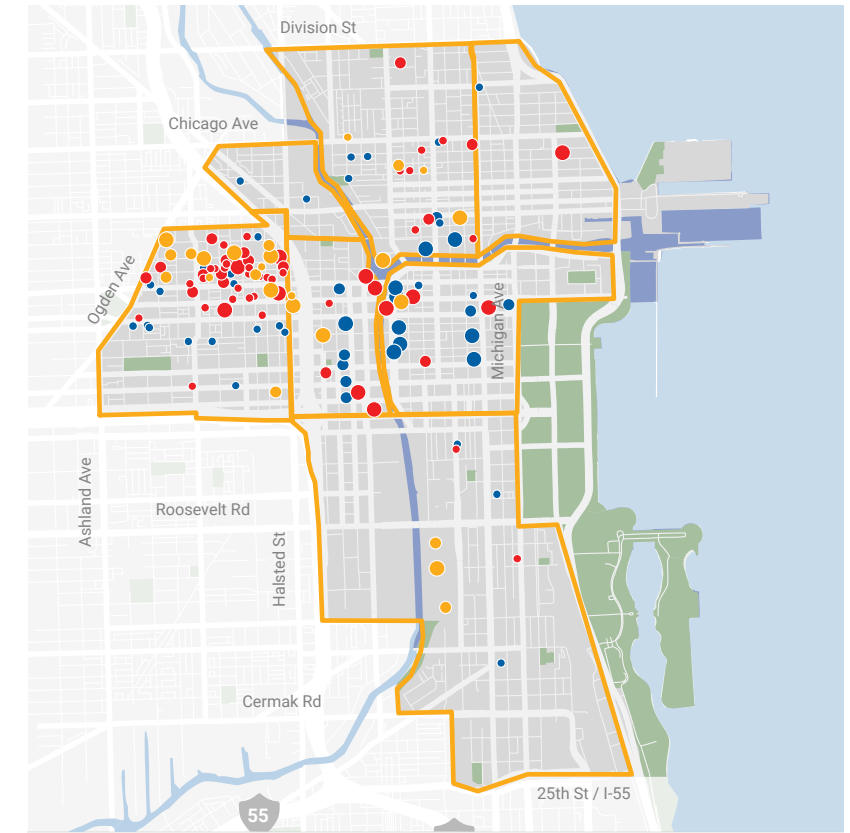
Chicago is only one of two U.S. metros besides New York City where most of the region’s office space is located downtown, versus in suburban office parks.

Chicago’s Central Area has more than 207 million square feet of office space, more than half of it in the Loop. Nearly a quarter of all office space in the Central Area was built after 2000. Since 2010, new office construction has been concentrated in Fulton Market and West Loop.

**DOWNTOWN DISTRICT OFFICE INVENTORY**  
2023, by submarket



Source: CoStar, SB Friedman



**OFFICE DEVELOPMENT SINCE 2000**  
in square feet, Downtown District

- 0 – 100,000 sq. ft.
- 100,001 – 500,000 sq. ft.
- 500,000+ sq. ft.
- Pipeline
- Built 2000–2010
- Built 2010–current

Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

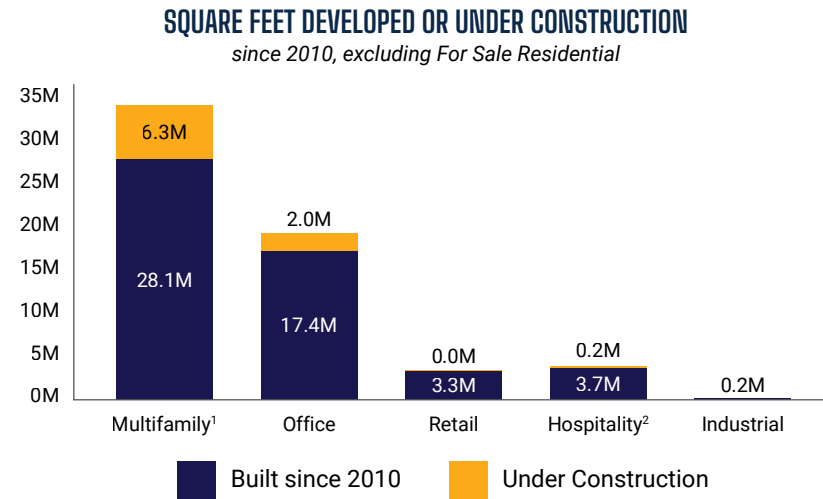


## Continued Real Estate Investment Downturn

Since 2010, more than 60 million square feet of development has been completed or is under construction in the Downtown District.

Most of the new construction has been multifamily rental and office space.

According to City of Chicago building permit data, the \$16.25 billion in downtown construction investment since 2010 is 60% residential. Construction investment declined in 2021 and is still recovering from the pandemic. Overall, continued construction spending in the Downtown District illustrates the area's stability and attractiveness for new investment.



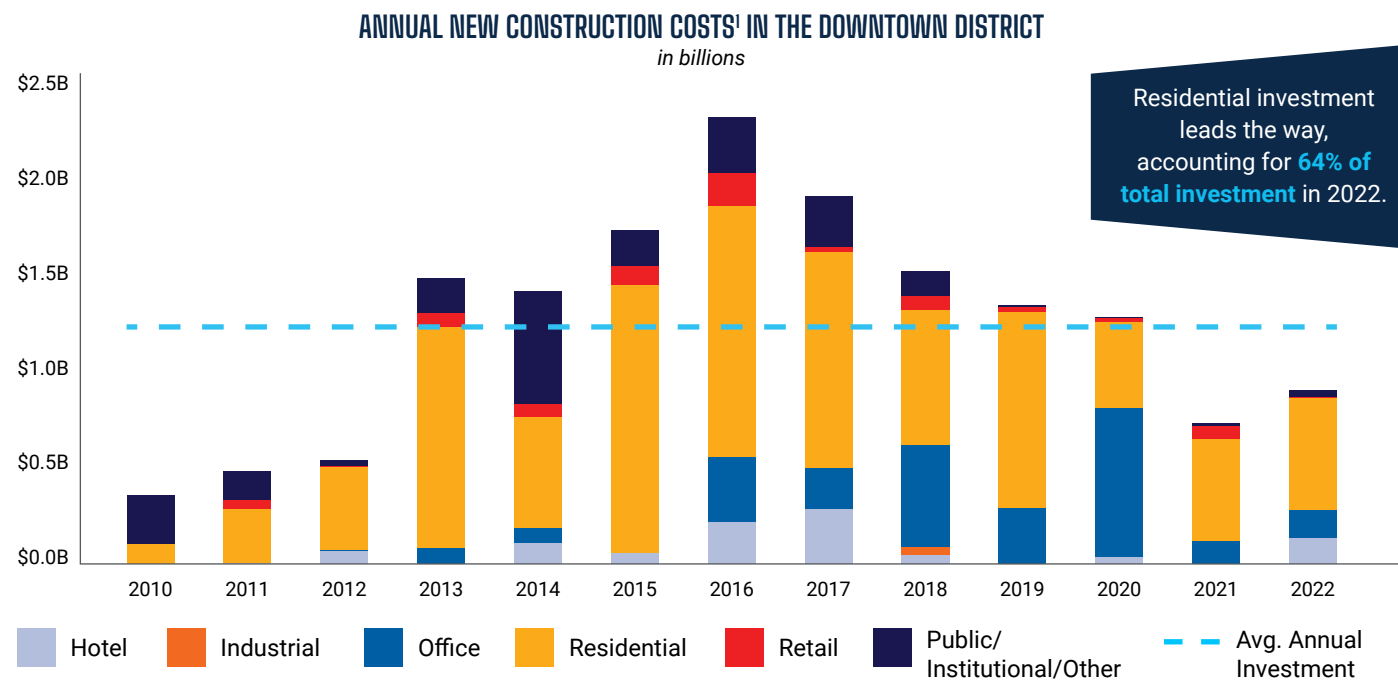
Source: CoStar, CNBC

1. Square feet calculated by multiplying number of units by average unit size
2. Square feet calculated by multiplying number of units by average hotel room size as reported by CNBC, 330 square feet

## Tourism

In addition to a concentration of businesses, downtown Chicago offers a wide range of arts, entertainment, cultural experiences, and other activities making it one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country.

More on the Central Area's arts and entertainment can be found in the preceding section. Tourism is a key part of Chicago's economy and has substantially rebounded from the pandemic, based on downtown hotel performance.



Source: City of Chicago Permit Data, Esri, SB Friedman

1. Defined as materials and labor in application.







NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION SHOW AT MCCORMICK PLACE (2023)

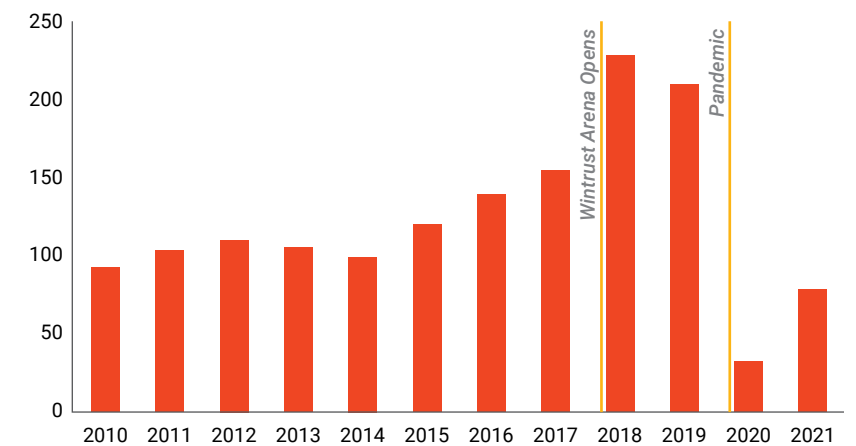
55,000 attendees

## McCormick Place Convention Center

The McCormick Place convention center, located at the southern edge of the Central Area, is the largest in North America and home to some of most-attended conventions, meetings and trade shows in the world.

With the opening of the 10,400-seat Wintrust Arena in 2017, McCormick Place has also become a place for collegiate sporting events and concerts. In 2019, McCormick Place held 289 events with a total attendance of 2.9 million, serving as a key generator of tourism activity in the region. Like many other convention centers across the country, the number of events has dropped significantly since the onset of the pandemic.

MCCORMICK PLACE EVENTS  
number of total major events



Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

The 2024 Democratic National Convention will be hosted at McCormick Place and the United Center, located just west of the

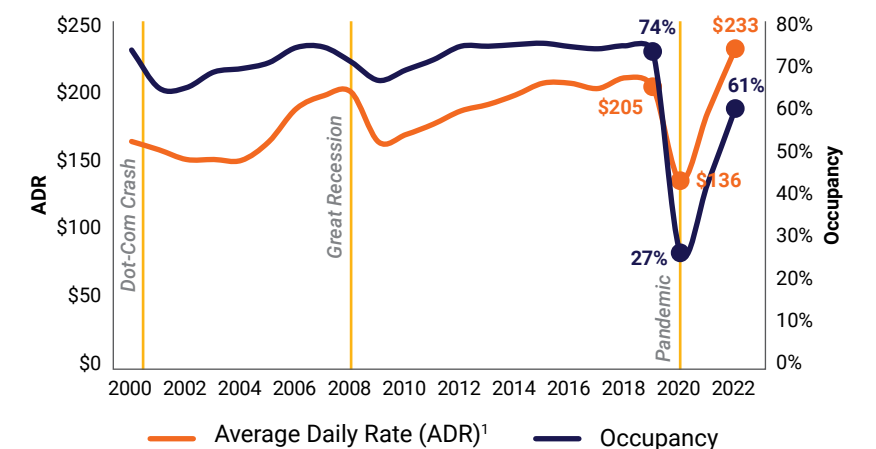
Central Area. The convention is estimated to attract 50,000 visitors and generate \$120 million in economic activity.

## Hotel Room Occupancy and Average Daily Rate Rebounds

Nearly 140 hotels downtown provide approximately 44,400 rooms for business and leisure travelers.

While occupancy in 2022 was still short of pre-pandemic levels, the average daily rate of \$233 exceeded the 2019 pre-pandemic rate. There continues to be strong gains in hotel performance in 2023. Chicago reportedly set a record for weekend hotel bookings in June 2023, reaching 97% occupancy with more than 44,000 bookings, due to a combination of conventions, the James Beard Awards, Blues Fest and a three-night Taylor Swift residency at Soldier Field. Pent up demand for leisure travel is expected to continue boosting hotel performance in 2023.

HOTEL AVERAGE DAILY RATES (ADR) AND OCCUPANCY  
Downtown District



Source: CoStar

1. ADR is nominal and not adjusted for inflation.

HOTEL INVENTORY:  
139 Hotels  
44,380 Keys



## Economic Development Partners

Several partner agencies contribute to Chicago's economic vibrancy and resilience, some of these include:

- **CHOOSE CHICAGO** is the official marketing organization for the city and is dedicated to attracting meetings, events, and leisure travelers to Chicago. They promote and publicize Chicago festivals, experiences, museums, and other attractions, helping elevate Chicago as a global destination.
- **WORLD BUSINESS CHICAGO** is the public-private economic development agency for the city. Their mission includes driving inclusive economic growth and job creation by helping existing businesses expand and attracting new investment from around the world.
- **CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE** support economic development in neighborhoods throughout Chicago by providing small business support and community development activities. Several neighborhoods within and overlapping the Central Area, such as West Loop, South Loop, Chinatown, River North and Streeterville, have local chambers helping to maintain vibrant commercial districts.

- **SPECIAL SERVICE AREAS (SSA) PROVIDERS** manage designated areas where a special property tax levy is assessed to fund additional services not funded through regular City revenues, such as maintenance and beautification, district marketing and advertising, special events and promotional activities, security and other economic development initiatives. Four SSAs –

State Street, Michigan Avenue, Oak Street, and Greektown – are located completely within the Central Area. The Chinatown, West Town and Old Town SSAs overlap the Central Area. In 2022, these SSAs had tax rates ranging from 0.036% to 0.5040% within their geographies. This represents an increase of 0.5% – 7.2% over the Tax Year 2021 nominal city property tax rate of 6.7%.



### SPECIAL SERVICE AREA LOCATIONS

2023, Downtown District

- Special Service Areas (SSAs)

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

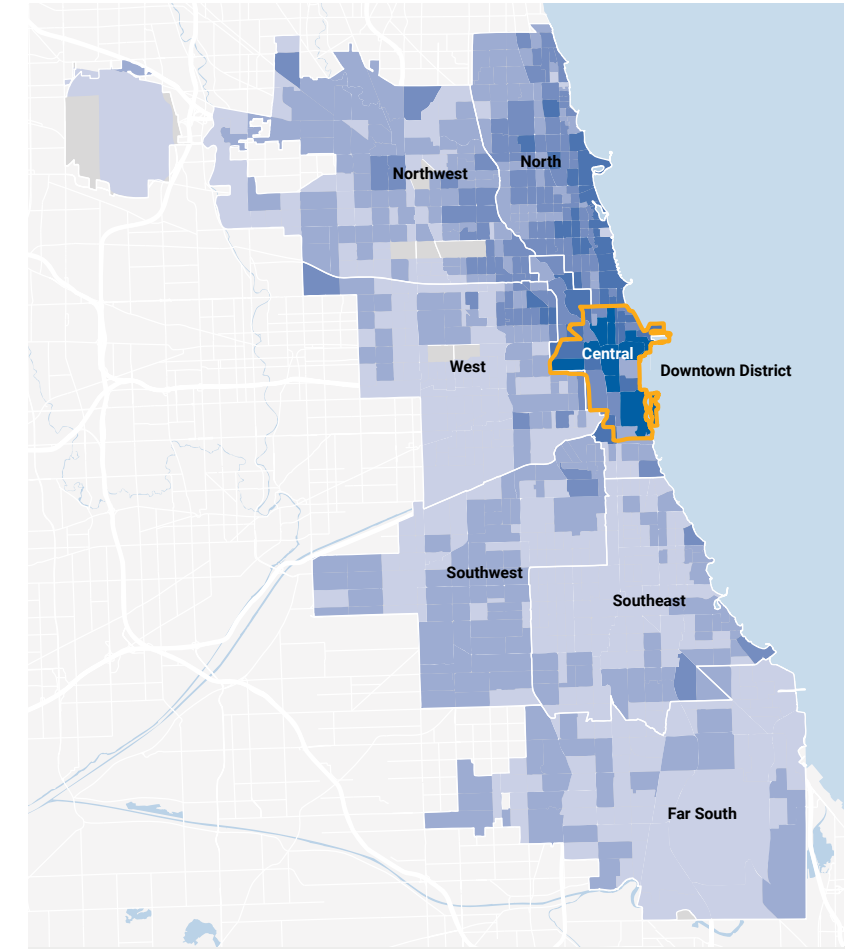
## CHALLENGES

### Unequal Access to Jobs Downtown

The Central Area has the highest concentration of jobs in the city, but not all Chicagoans have equitable access to these jobs.

Over half of downtown jobs are performed by Chicago residents; while 33% are held by residents of the North, Central and Northwest sides only 19% are held by predominantly Black and Latino residents of the South and West sides of the city.

PLANNING AREA / PLACE OF RESIDENCE	SHARE OF DOWNTOWN DISTRICT JOBS
North	16%
Central	9%
Northwest	8%
West	7%
Southeast	5%
Southwest	4%
Far South	3%
Outside Chicago	49%



### INBOUND COMMUTERS BY CENSUS TRACT

2019

- < 250
- 251 – 500
- 501 – 1,000
- 1,001 – 2,000
- 2,001 – 5,000

51% of jobs are held by workers residing in the City of Chicago.

Source: Esri, Longitudinal Employment Household Dynamics, SB Friedman



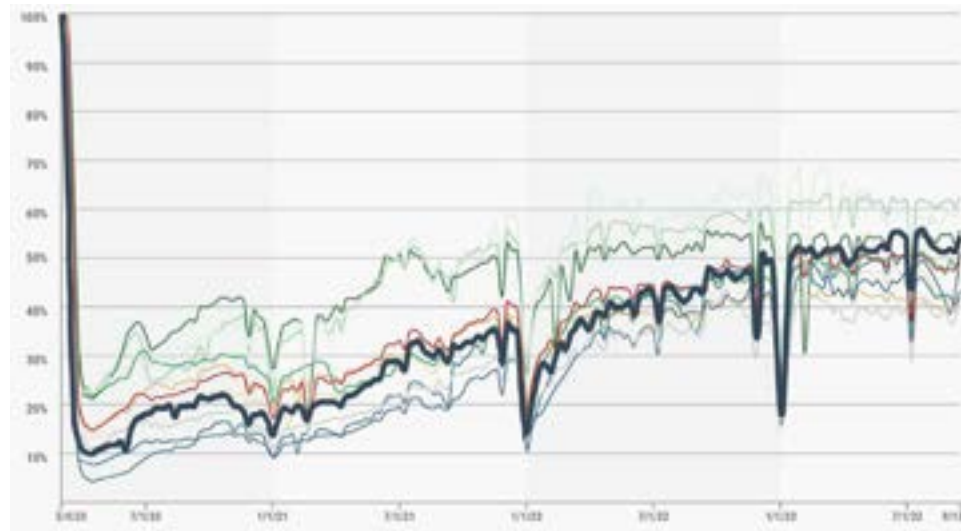
## Declines in In-Person Office Occupancy

Rather than five-day, in-person work weeks that were traditional prior to the pandemic, many office workers across the country now work from home two or three days a week.

Among 10 large U.S. metros, in-person office occupancy is averaging approximately 50% of pre-pandemic levels based on Kastle's weekly in-person occupancy report data, as of

September 2023. With a return to work rate of 54%, the Chicago metro is outperforming the 10-metro region average and all metro areas outside of Texas.

**WEEKLY IN-PERSON OFFICE OCCUPANCY**  
March 2020 to September 2023



Source: Kastle

Figures in this chart reflect the percent of workers in the office compared to typical, pre-pandemic levels, using a baseline of three weeks in February of 2020.

Houston metro	61.6%
Austin metro	59.3%
Dallas metro	54.9%
<b>Chicago metro</b>	<b>53.6%</b>
<b>10-Metro Average</b>	<b>50.3%</b>
New York metro	50.1%
Los Angeles metro	49.4%
D.C. metro	47.9%
Philadelphia metro	42.7%
San Francisco metro	42.6%
San Jose metro	41.5%



## Declines in Lease Occupancy

The 10-city average lease occupancy rate was about 90% in 2019 but declined to under 86% in 2022.

The Chicago office lease occupancy trend is similar to the 10-city average, declining from a high of nearly 92% in 2019 to just under the 10-city average in 2022.

As with many major downtowns, overall office vacancy has risen in Chicago's downtown since 2019. Older Class A office buildings that had stable vacancy of around 10% from 2010 to 2019 increased to 18% vacancy in mid-2023. Class B and C buildings fared similarly, increasing from 9% vacancy in 2019 to 16% in July 2023. LaSalle Street, Chicago's traditional financial district, with a large share of older, historic buildings, has an office vacancy rate of more than 30%.

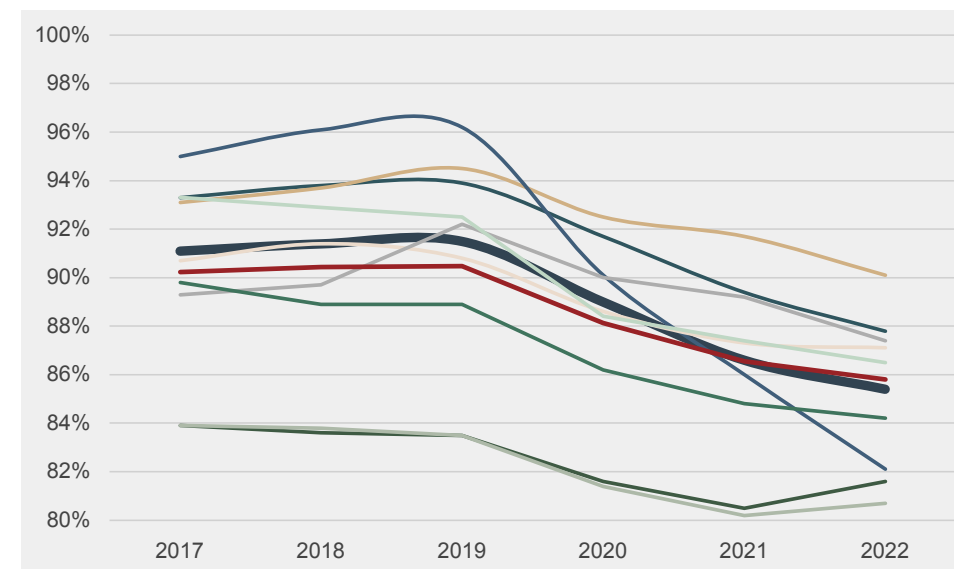
"Trophy" Class A buildings (larger than 100,000 square feet and built 2010 or later)



are the most stable office product downtown. These buildings are concentrated in the West Loop, Fulton Market and along the Chicago River. They had a much lower vacancy rate of 7% in mid-2023 but account for only 11% of the total downtown office inventory. This local trend is supported by national data

indicating a "flight to quality," as firms seek high-amenity office space to attract talent and compete in the new hybrid work environment ("Work from Home and the Office Real Estate Apocalypse," Arpit Gupta, Vrinda Mittal, Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh; May 15, 2023).

**OFFICE LEASE OCCUPANCY**



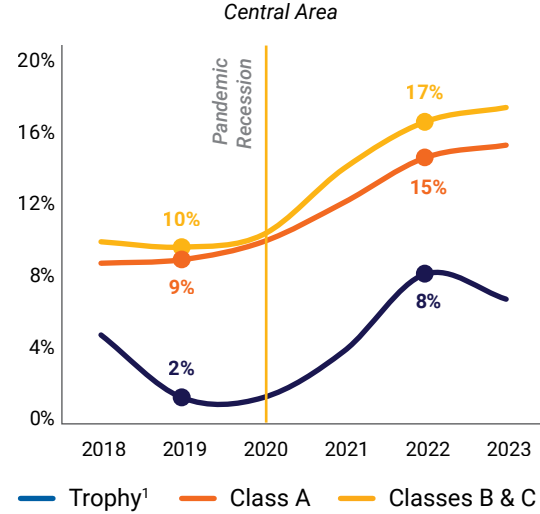
Philadelphia	90.1%
New York	87.8%
San Jose	87.4%
D.C.	87.1%
Austin	86.5%
<b>10-City Average</b>	<b>85.8%</b>
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>85.4%</b>
Los Angeles	84.2%
San Francisco	82.1%
Dallas	81.6%
Houston	80.7%

Source: Kastle

Figures in this chart reflect the percent of workers in the office compared to typical, pre-pandemic levels, using a baseline of three weeks in February of 2020.



### OFFICE VACANCY BY BUILDING CLASS



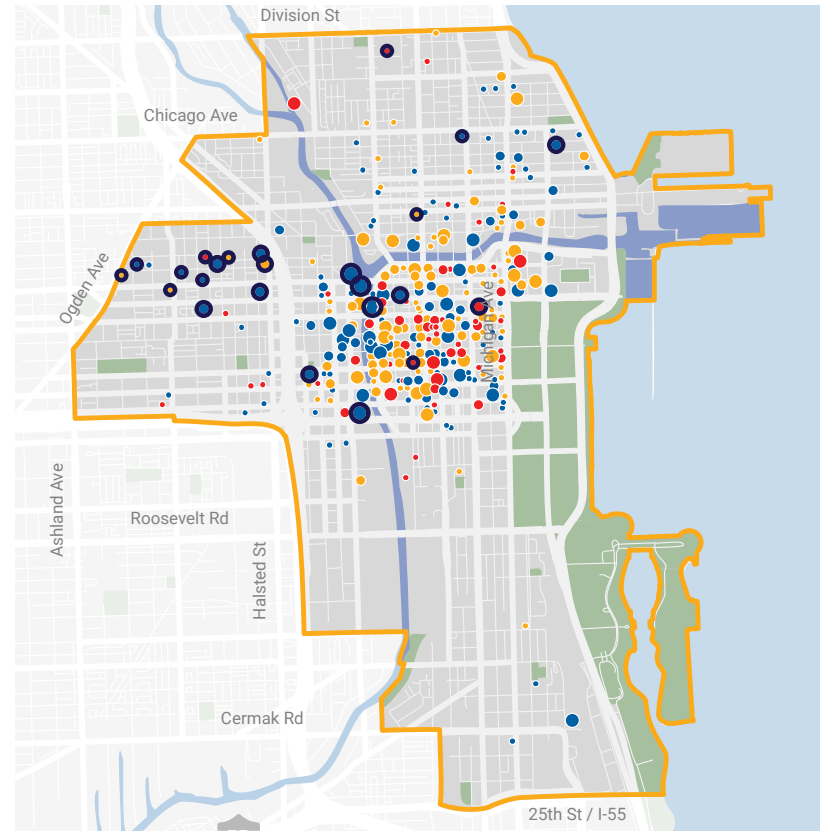
Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

1. Trophy Buildings are defined here as Class A buildings greater than 100,000 sq. ft. built since 2010



## Office Valuation Risk

The future of the downtown office market affects the entire city because the area accounts for 45% of the citywide taxable value.



### OFFICE BUILDING OCCUPANCY

2023, in square feet, built prior to 2021, 100,000 sq. ft. or larger, Downtown District

- 100,000 – 400,000 sq. ft. ■ < 70% Occupied
- 400,001 – 1,000,000 sq. ft. ■ 70% – 90% Occupied
- 400,001 – 1,000,000 sq. ft. ● > 90% Occupied
- Trophy Buildings<sup>1</sup>

Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

1. Trophy Buildings are defined here as Class A buildings greater than 100,000 sq. ft. built since 2010

Within the Central Area, office buildings contribute 60% of the taxable value. Therefore, any significant reductions in office property value will reduce

the amount of property tax collections from office uses both downtown and citywide, shifting the tax burden to other land uses.

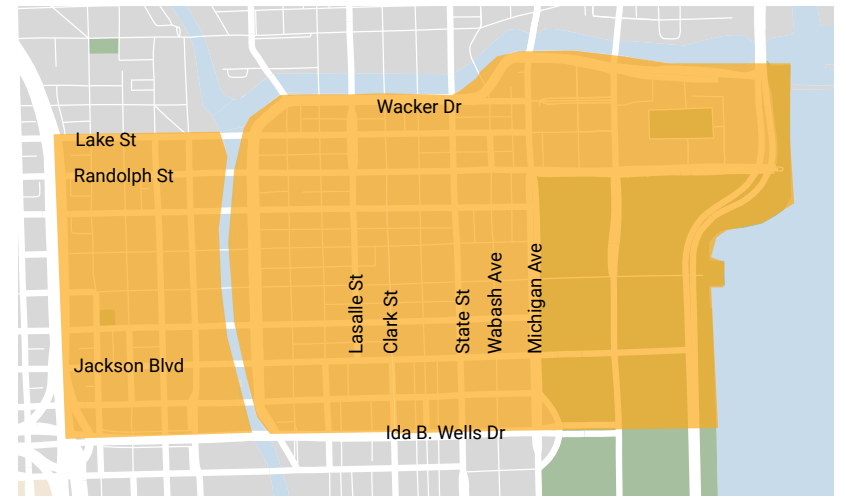
## Higher Retail Vacancy

The rise of e-commerce has been negatively impacting traditional brick-and-mortar retail for more than a decade.

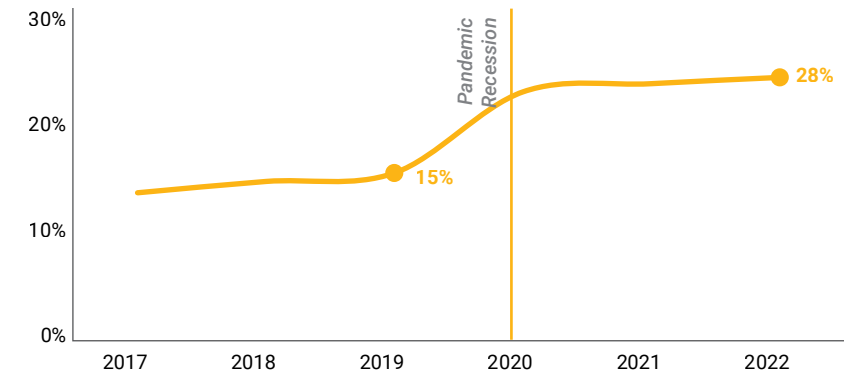
Retail challenges have been exacerbated downtown since the onset of the pandemic because of work-from-home trends, the initial reduction in tourism and increases in crime. Retail vacancy in the Loop and West Loop rose from 15% in 2019 to 28% in 2022, according to analysis by Stone Real Estate. Within the Loop, the highest retail vacancy, of nearly 35%, is in the LaSalle Wacker submarket bounded by the Chicago River, Ida B. Wells Drive and Clark Street.

High retail vacancies contributed to a significant decrease in sales tax revenue during the pandemic. Citywide, sales tax revenue decreased by 27% from 2019 to 2020. In ZIP codes overlapping downtown, sales tax revenue decreased by 47% from 2019 to 2020, equivalent to a reduction of sales of \$186 million.

### LOOP/WEST LOOP AREA



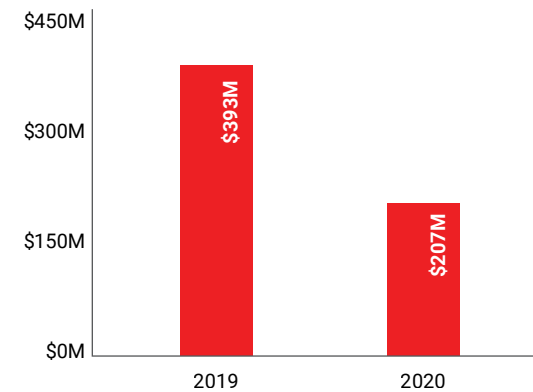
### RETAIL VACANCY IN THE LOOP/WEST LOOP AREA



Source: Stone Real Estate, SB Friedman

### REDUCTION IN SALES TAX REVENUE<sup>1</sup>

2019–2020, Downtown District



Source: City of Chicago, Esri, Illinois Department of Revenue, Chicago Sun Times, SB Friedman

1. State's portion of sales tax revenue collected

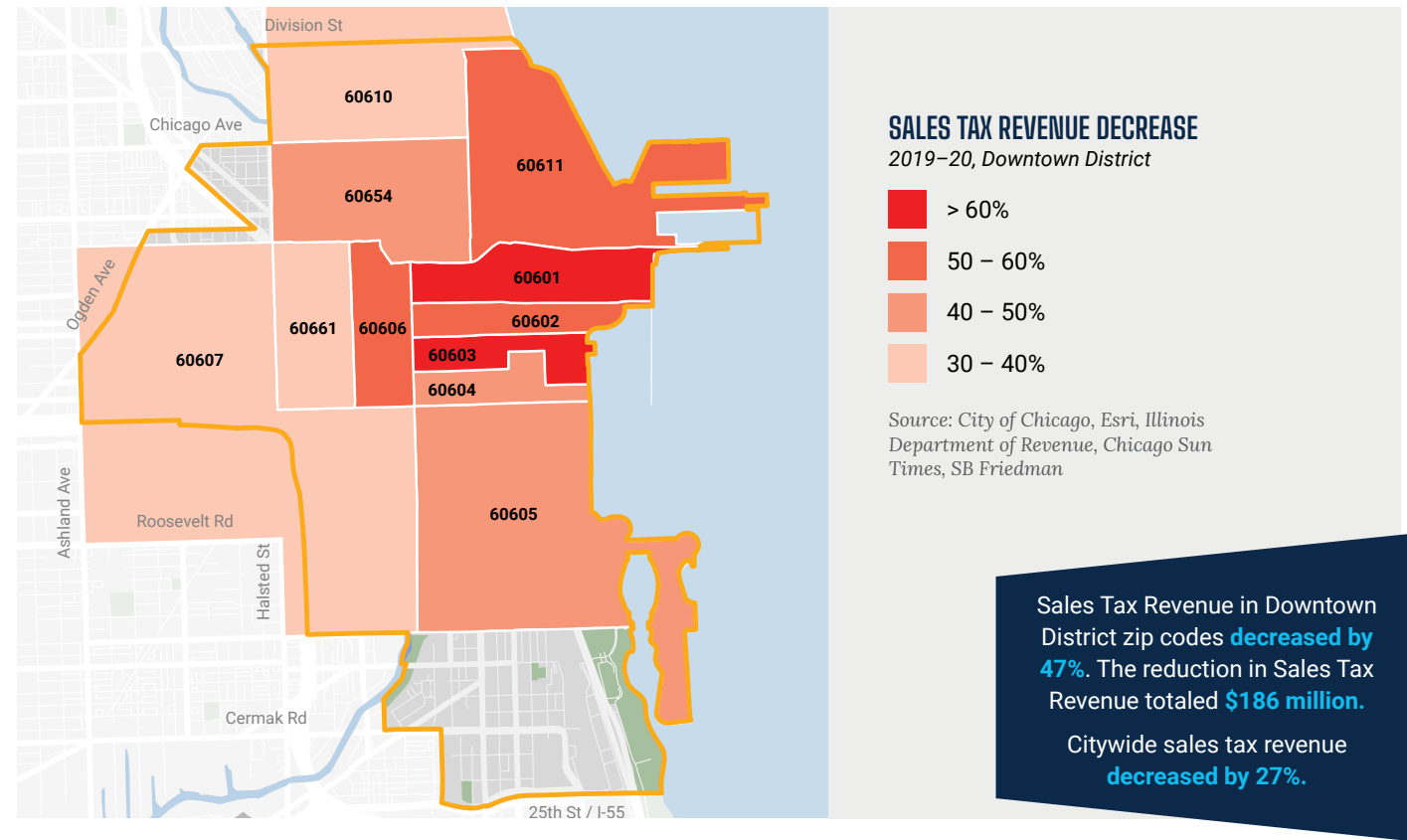
■ **MICHIGAN AVENUE CORRIDOR:** bounded by the Chicago River to the North, Ida B. Wells Drive to the South, Lake Michigan to the East and the east side of Wabash to the West

■ **CENTRAL LOOP:** bounded by the Chicago River to the North, Ida B. Wells Drive to the South, the west side of Wabash to the East and the east side of Clark Street to the West

■ **LASALLE WACKER CORRIDOR:** bounded by the Chicago River to the North, Ida B. Wells Drive to the South, the west side of Clark Street to the East and the Chicago River to the West

■ **WEST LOOP:** bounded by the Chicago River to the East, I-90/94 on the West, the south side of Lake Street on the North and Ida B. Wells Drive on the South





## Reduced Activity

The Downtown District has bounced back from the steep declines in daily visits during the height of the pandemic, but is yet to recover to pre-pandemic levels, according to cell phone data.

In 2019, on an average day, downtown had 132,000 residents, 613,000 employees and 535,000 visitors for a total of over 1.2 million visits. While the number of downtown residents increased to 146,000 in 2023, employee visits are today only 68% of 2019 levels. Non-employee visits are nearly 82% of 2019 levels.

**AVERAGE DAILY STAYS/VISITS AND RECOVERY COMPARED TO 2019<sup>1,2</sup>**  
Downtown District

	RESIDENTS		EMPLOYEES		VISITORS	
	STAYS	RECOVERY %	VISITS	RECOVERY %	VISITS	RECOVERY %
<b>2019</b>	132,000	--	567,000	--	535,000	--
<b>2020</b>	149,000	113%	257,000	45%	269,000	50%
<b>2021</b>	143,000	108%	209,000	37%	408,000	76%
<b>2022</b>	141,000	107%	317,000	56%	454,000	85%
<b>2023<sup>3</sup></b>	146,000	111%	385,000	68%	438,000	82%

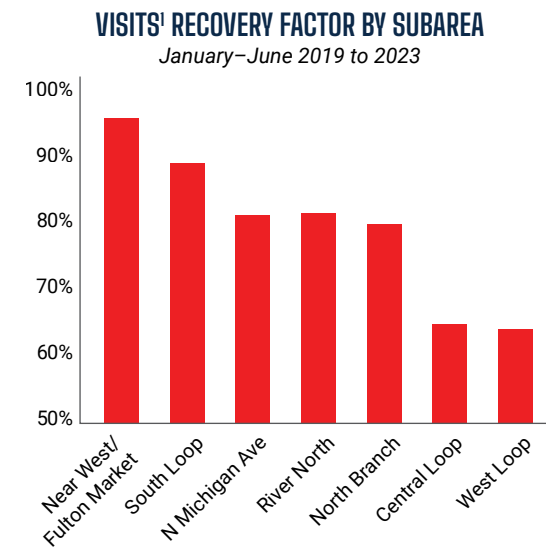
Source: Placer AI and SB Friedman

1. Cell phone data is aggregated and categorized into visitor, employee and resident for the Downtown District (analysis boundary) based on the following: Resident – defined by a device being inside the analysis boundary, overnight, on a regular basis over the last 30 days; Employee – shows repeated visit patterns during weekdays (both multiple days in a single week and over longer periods); Visitor – anyone who enters the analysis boundary for more than 7 minutes, counted once per 24-hour period.

2. Average daily visits for employees exclude weekends and major holidays.

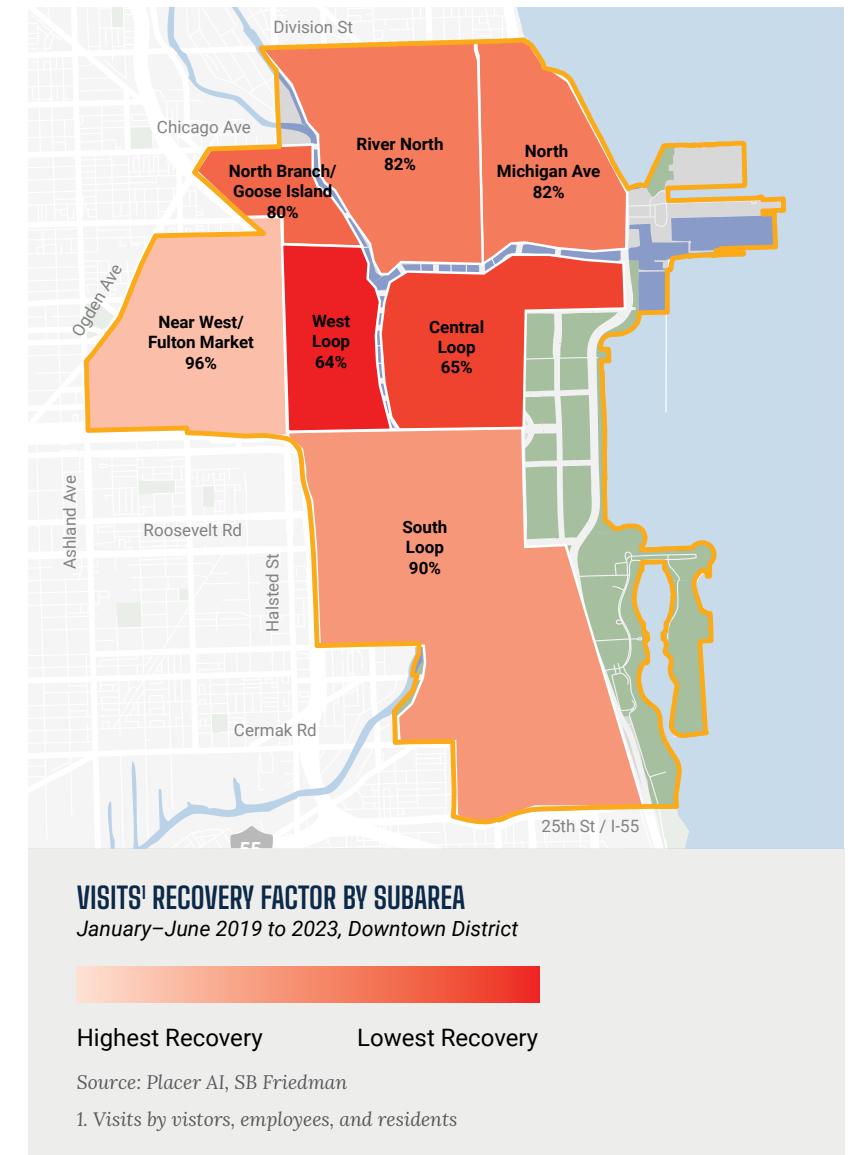
3. 2023 daily stays and visits reflect averages from January 1 to June 30.

The recent recovery of combined visits varies by sub-area. The number of visits to the South Loop and Near West/Fulton Market areas in the first six months of 2023 recovered to 90% and 96%, respectively, of pre-pandemic levels. Subareas with higher shares of office space saw sluggish recoveries, such as the West Loop at 64% and the Central Loop at 65%. More tourist-dependent areas like River North and North Michigan Avenue saw more moderate recoveries of 82% each.



Source: Placer AI, SB Friedman

1. Visits by visitors, employees, and residents





## KEY INITIATIVES

### Retail Business Support

To address high retail vacancy rates downtown, City Council approved the first ever Small Business Improvement Fund (SBIF) grant program in the Loop.

This grant program supports permanent improvements to vacant and existing retail spaces, focused around the LaSalle Street corridor to help local entrepreneurs create cafes, restaurants, stores and other

neighborhood-oriented amenities. The City is also reviewing several proposals to assist the conversion of underutilized office buildings along LaSalle Street to mixed-income housing.



### Chicago Recovery Funds

In addition to the \$1.9 billion in funding received under the American Rescue Plan Act, the City contributed more than \$600 million in local bond funding to support economic recovery from the pandemic.

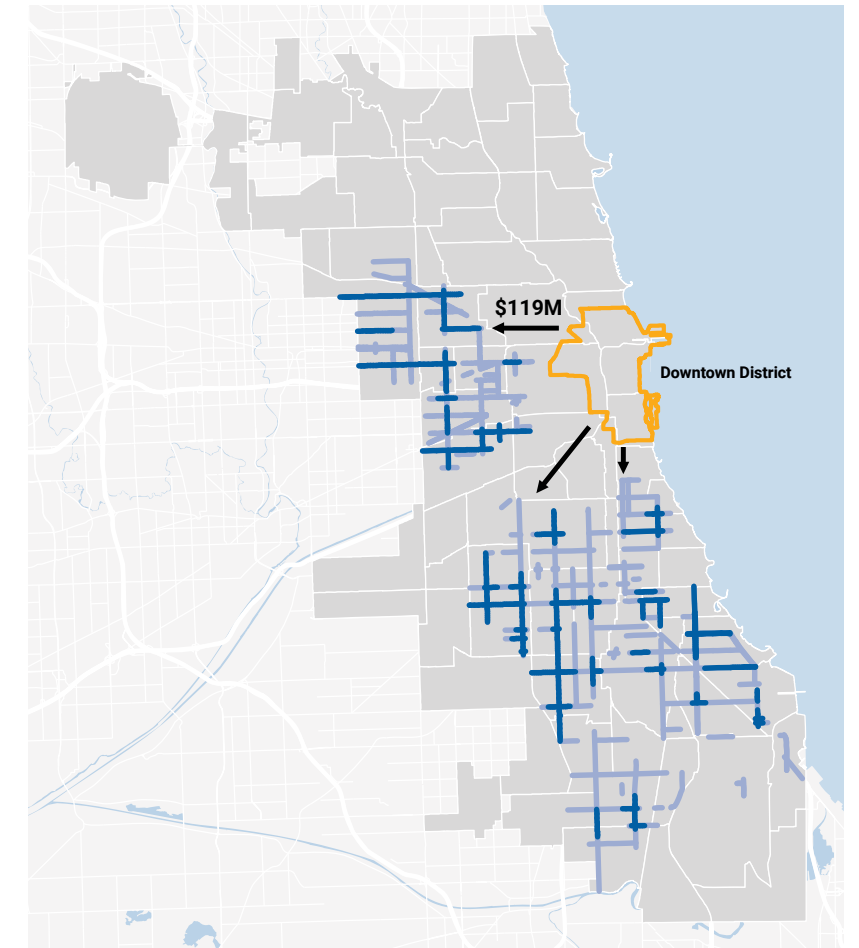
The City created the Chicago Recovery Plan (CRP) to guide the equitable distribution of these funds, supporting investments in affordable housing, small business support, health and wellness, and arts and culture among other things. Approximately 20% of the nearly 550 CRP grants allocated citywide to date are for projects within or overlapping Central Area communities.



### Neighborhood Opportunity Fund

Since the inception of the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) bonus system in 2016, \$149 million in NOF revenues have been collected.

10% of all NOF funds, approximately \$15 million, have been allocated to the Local Impact Fund (LIF) to support eligible downtown improvements within parks and green spaces, improvements for street, transit and mobility infrastructure and other public facilities. To date, LIF has funded completed projects for a new children's playlot in Seneca Park, utility work in Washington Square Park, and the construction of a new West Loop Library. 80% of NOF resources encourage development in West, Southwest and South side commercial corridors. The remaining 10% of NOF proceeds are dedicated to designated landmarks.



#### NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY BONUS AND FUND PAYMENTS 2016-22

Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus Payments <sup>1</sup>	\$149M
Neighborhood Opportunity Fund Allocation	80%
Neighborhood Opportunity Fund	\$119M

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

1. Neighborhood Opportunity Bonuses from payments in the Downtown District for increased Floor Area Ratio (FAR) (FAR reflects the total square footage of the building divided by the area of the lot). 80% is allocated to the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF), 10% of payments are allocated to the Local Impact Fund and 10% to the Citywide Landmark Fund.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY FUND (NOF) CORRIDORS 2023

- NOF Priority Corridor
- NOF Eligible Corridor

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

Development Downtown directly generates public funds to support development projects on the South, West, and Southwest sides.





## **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)**

Business Improvement Districts help business areas utilize flexible funding strategies that reduce vacancies, improve public safety, and foster economic activity.

Legislation is currently pending at the state level to enable BIDs. While BIDs have been used for decades throughout the U.S. and Canada, Illinois is among just five states in the country without BID legislation.

### PILLAR 4

# Environment, Climate & Energy



The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update





# ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY

**Situated along the shores of Lake Michigan, the Central Area’s easternmost boundary stretches more than five miles along the lakefront.**

The proximity of the downtown and the city as a whole to the lake provides abundant access to freshwater and makes the area more resilient to climate change impacts compared to many other cities. With all three branches of the Chicago River converging in the center of the downtown, the river is not only one of downtown’s most important natural resources it is also a natural contrast to the urban environment and an important recreational resource. Chicago is also insulated from extreme drought conditions, rising ocean levels, increasing frequency of hurricanes and forest fires. However, Chicago is experiencing more extreme weather events such as deadly heat waves exacerbated by the urban heat island effect which is prevalent downtown, heavier precipitation resulting in more severe and frequent flooding events and fluctuating water levels in Lake Michigan.



## ASSETS

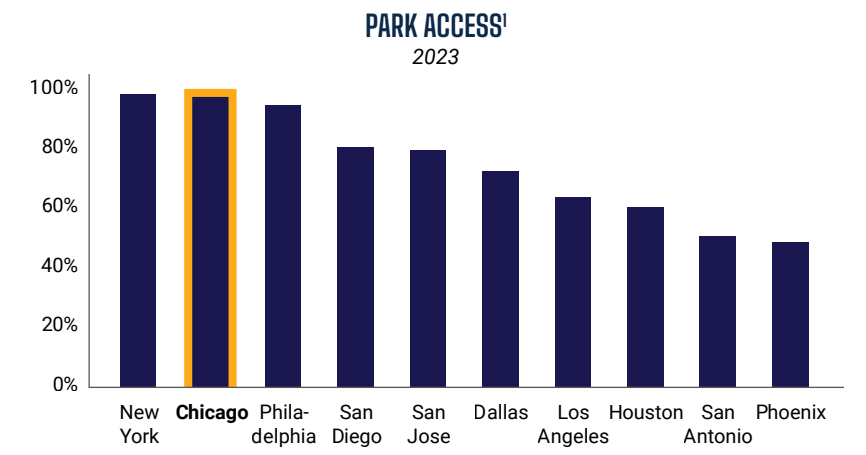
### Parks and Open Space

Parks and open spaces help support a healthy ecosystem by serving as habitats for native plant and animal species, helping with flood mitigation and reducing urban heat islands.

Research shows that access to open space also has physical and mental health benefits for residents by supporting active lifestyles and providing spaces for quiet contemplation and community gatherings.

Community areas overlapping the Central Area have 928 acres of parks and open spaces. Most of the downtown open space acreage is concentrated in public parks including Grant Park, Maggie Daley Park, Northerly Island, and Millennium Park, Chicago’s top tourist destination.

In addition to public parks, many privately owned open spaces, built as part of private office and residential developments, are available for public use. Since 2000, at least 20 such open spaces have been completed or are under construction in the Central Area. Also, community gardens, like Printers Row Park Community Garden, and urban farms provide additional ways for residents to experience open space and connect with each other.



Source: Trust for Public Land, 2023 Park Index

1. Percent of citywide population that lives within a 10-minute walk of a park with public access

Winding its way through downtown, the Chicago River is a vital aesthetic, environmental and recreational resource. Its ongoing revitalization shaped by the Chicago River Corridor Development Plan (1999) and the Chicago River Design Guidelines (2018) and funded by significant public and private investment has yielded one of the downtown’s most active recreational and commercial destinations. Riverfront parks, greenways, multi-use paths, overlooks and restored natural habitats have carved out unique open spaces in the heart of

downtown. Public riverfront parks including Ward Park and Ping Tom Memorial Park provide recreational amenities along the north and south branches of the Chicago River. As public demand for riverfront access continues to grow, the Chicago River supports downtown vitality by offering opportunities for further open space creation, resiliency and economic development. See the Appendix at the end of this report for a Parks & Open Space map illustrating both public parks and privately owned, publicly accessible spaces.





## Climate Resilience and Access to Fresh Water

Unlike many other cities in the country, Chicago is shielded from many of the devastating impacts of climate change, including rising sea-levels, hurricanes and wildfires.

It has the potential to be a climate refuge because of its unique locational attributes. Chicago's access to fresh water is a competitive advantage, facilitating population growth and the expansion of high-growth, water-intensive industries such as electric vehicles, chip manufacturing and life-sciences.

## Environment-Friendly Transportation Network

Downtown Chicago is accessible by transit from most parts of the city and the region.

As a result, many trips to and from downtown are completed via transit instead of personal automobiles, reducing vehicular emissions, which are a significant source of environmentally

damaging greenhouse gases. Strong pedestrian and bike networks within the downtown further reduce auto trips and associated emissions.

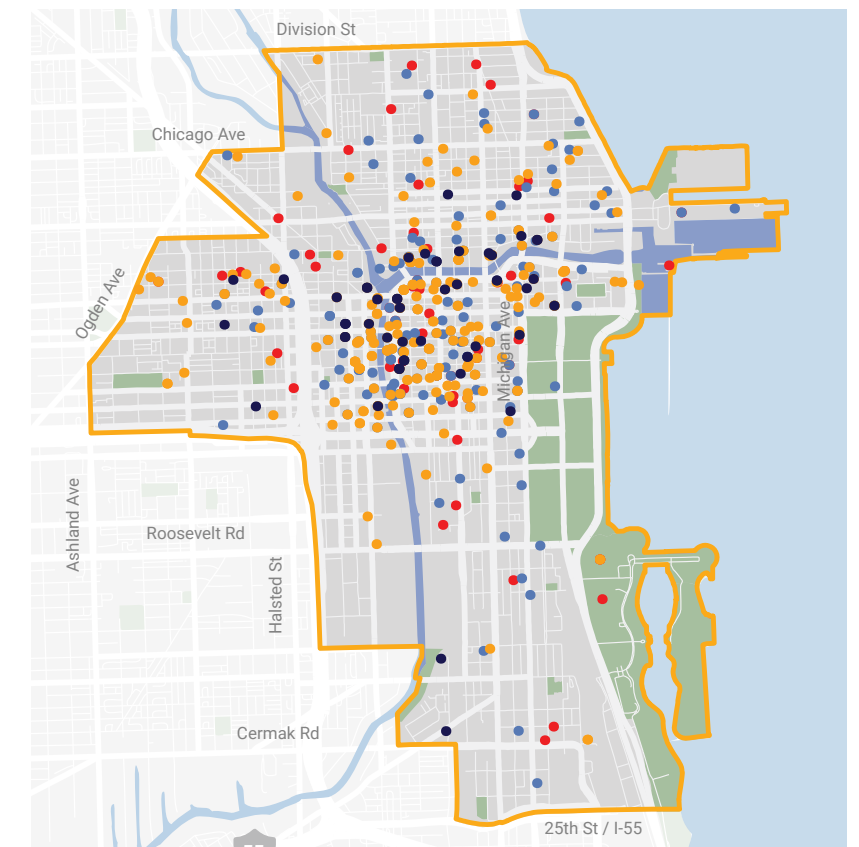
## Climate-Friendly Buildings

According to the 2022 Climate Action Plan, buildings account for nearly 70% of total citywide greenhouse gas emissions (GHG).

With its high concentration of buildings, downtown can play a significant role in reducing emissions and moving Chicago closer to its goal of 62% GHG reduction by 2040.

Over the last 30 years, more than 300 buildings in the Central Area have become LEED certified. LEED or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design is a certification administered by the U.S. Green Building Council to recognize buildings that are efficient, cost-effective and sustainable. Overall, Chicago has more than 960 LEED certified projects, making it the fifth most LEED certified projects.

Additionally, Chicago's Central Area has nearly 100 active green roofs with vegetative layers that reduce heat islands and mitigate flooding by reducing stormwater runoff.



### LEED BUILDINGS

2023, Downtown District

- Certified
- Silver
- Gold
- Platinum

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, US Green Building Council, SB Friedman

There are **300+** LEED certified buildings in the Downtown District.





## CHALLENGES

### Unequal Access to Parks

The distribution of parks varies within downtown.

The Near North and Near West community areas have less than 100 acres each, which is less than the City's minimum open space standard of two acres per 1,000 residents. Most of the publicly owned park acreage within the downtown is concentrated within the Loop and Near South Side community areas, which have more than 300 acres and 400 acres, respectively.

The Loop community area exceeds the city's minimum open space standard largely due to the presence of Grant Park. However, during summer months, Grant Park is frequently used for ticketed festivals and special events, limiting access for area residents.

	LOOP	NEAR SOUTH	NEAR NORTH	NEAR WEST	CITYWIDE
<b>Total Open Space (Acres)<sup>1</sup></b>	310.7	433.6	98.3	85.8	14,422.4
<b>Acres per 1,000 Residents (2020)</b>	7.3	15.1	0.9	1.3	5.3
<b>Acres of Open Space Needed (2/1000)</b>			112.7	49.9	

Source: Chicago Park District 2022 Land Acquisition Plan

1. Total open space is reflective of Chicago Park District, Cook County Forest Preserve, City of Chicago (Boulevards, Malls & Plazas), Illinois International Port District, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, NeighborSpace, and CPS Open Space land.



### Low Shares of Tree Canopy Leading to Increased Heat Island Effect

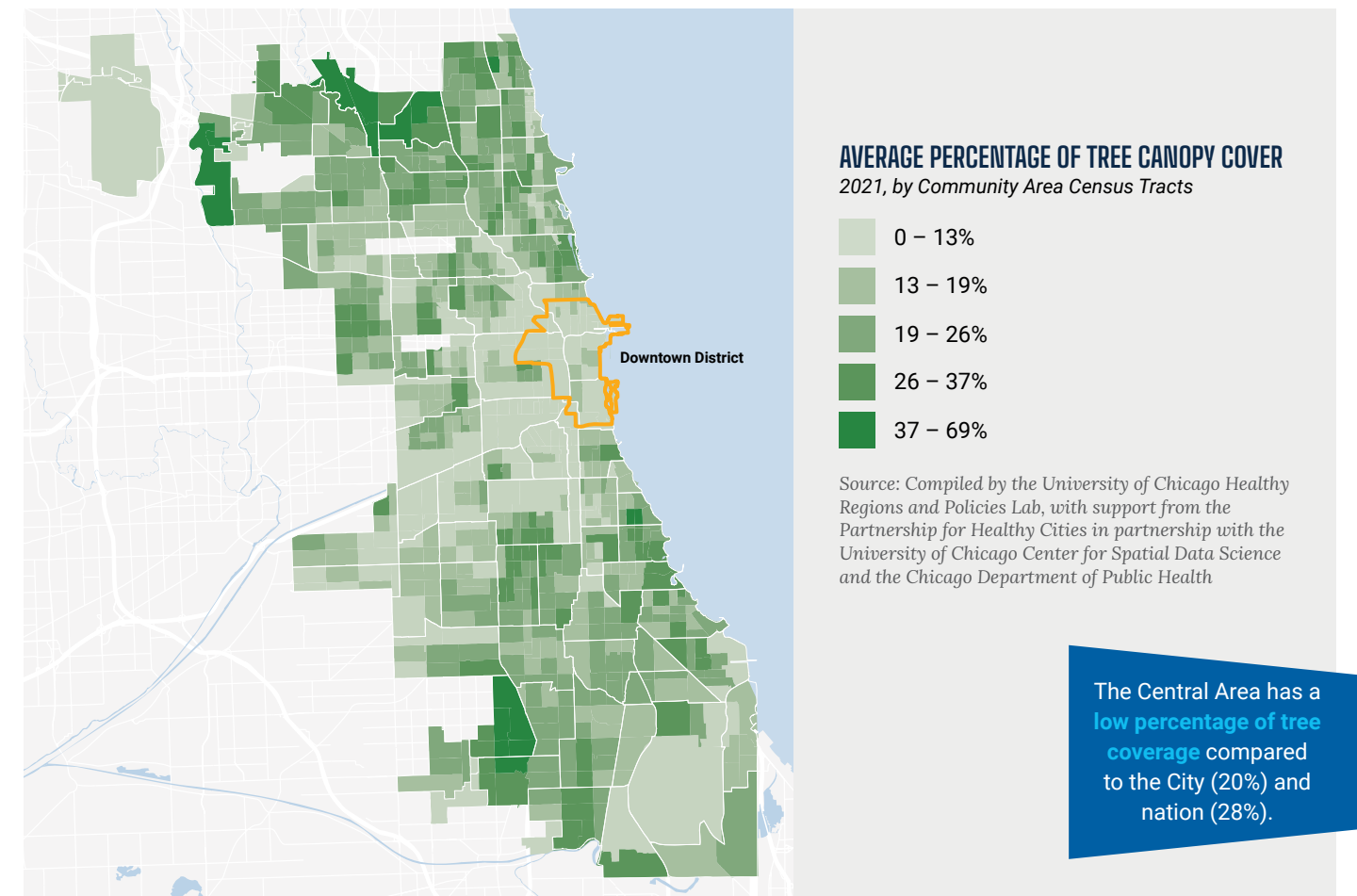
Community areas that overlap the downtown have a low percentage (8–14%) of tree coverage compared to citywide (20%) and national averages (28%).

In addition, their share of impervious surfaces is also high, ranging from 65% to 74% in parts of downtown. The concentration of pavements and lack of tree coverage contribute to the heat

island effect, which can cause highly urbanized areas downtown to be 15–20 degrees warmer than less developed surroundings, posing a serious health threat and increasing energy costs.

	LOOP	NEAR SOUTH	NEAR NORTH	NEAR WEST	WEST TOWN	ARMOUR SQUARE
<b>Tree Canopy Coverage</b>	10%	8%	9%	10%	14%	8%
<b>Impervious Surfaces</b>	65%	65%	73%	72%	67%	74%

Source: Urban Forestry Summary, Chicago Region Trees Initiative



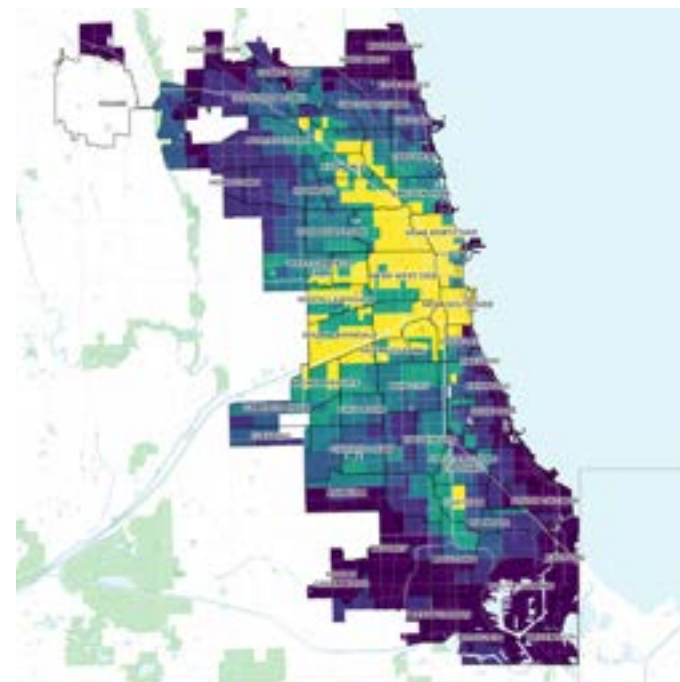




# Air Pollution

Most of the expressways traversing the Chicago region converge near the Loop, producing high levels of nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter pollution.

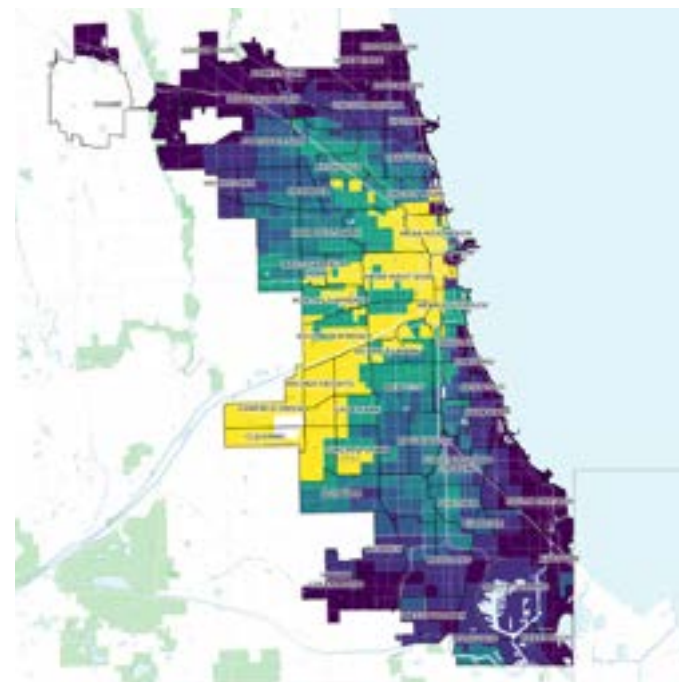
Additionally, as a national hub for freight transport, nearly one in seven vehicles on Chicago highways are cargo trucks. Since trucks on average tend to pollute more than personal automobiles, the higher truck traffic exacerbates the pollution challenge.



**CONCENTRATION OF NITROGEN DIOXIDE**  
2018-19



Source: Block Club Chicago



**CONCENTRATION OF FINE PARTICULATE MATTER**  
2018-19



Source: Block Club Chicago



# Bird Collisions

Chicago is positioned along a major flight path for millions of migratory birds, which are endangered by downtown buildings.

Bird Friendly Chicago, an alliance to promote a safe urban environment for birds, estimates more than 40,000 dead birds of over 200 species have been found in the Chicago Loop during the last 20 years. Cornell Lab of Ornithology ranked Chicago as being the most dangerous city for birds. DPD is working to amend the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy to provide greater priority to bird protection strategies with the goal of reducing bird mortality and injury from circumstances that are known to pose a high risk to birds.







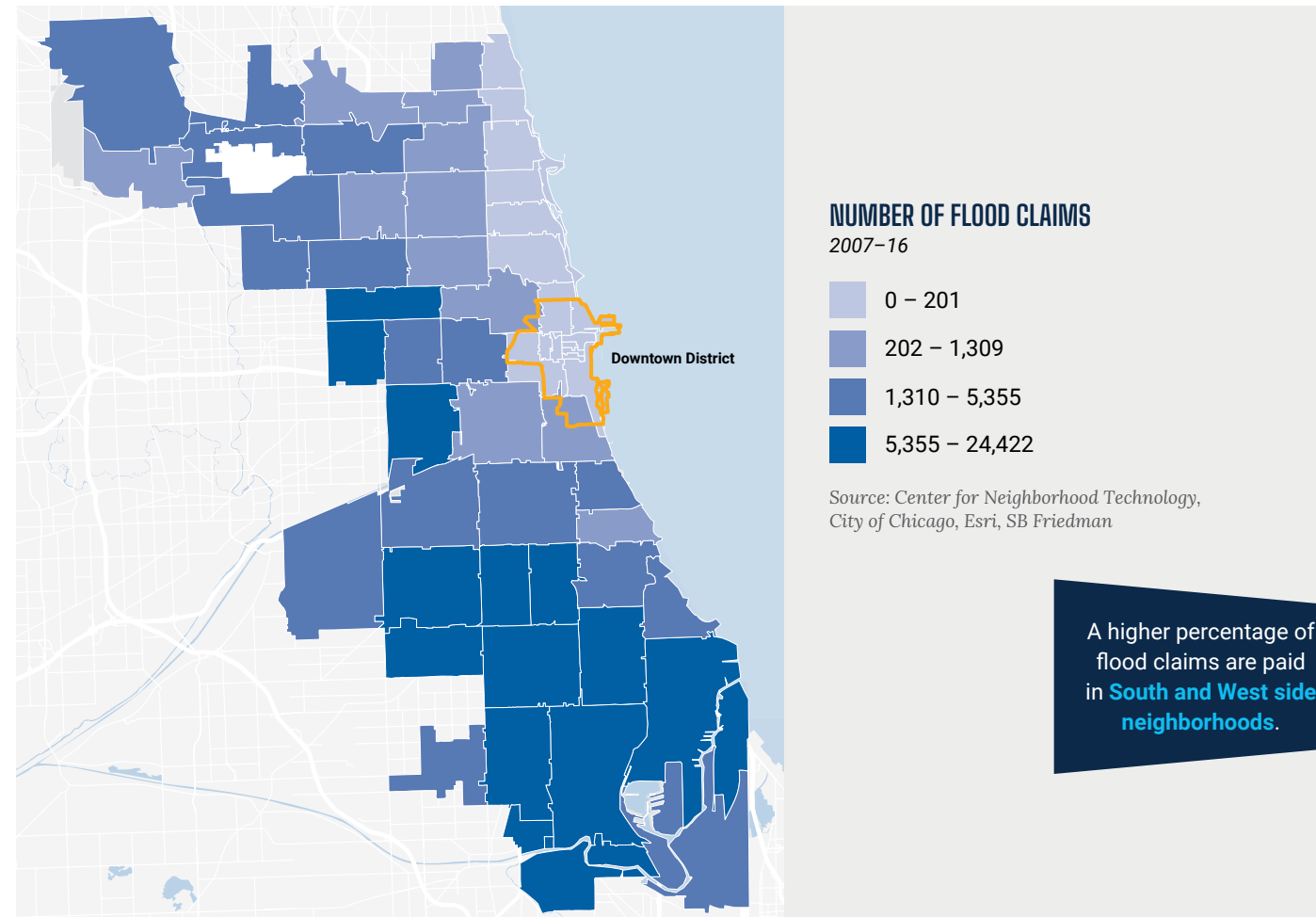
# Flooding

Most flooding in Chicago is due to local sewers reaching capacity during heavy rains and overflowing into basements of buildings.

More than \$400 million in insurance payments due to flood claims was paid to city residents between 2007 and 2016, according to Center for Neighborhood Technology data. The Central Area has a lower percentage of claims compared to South and West Side neighborhoods, highlighting the disparities that exist between Chicago neighborhoods.

The low incidence of Central Area flooding is partially due to the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP), also referred to as the “Deep Tunnel,” which is a system of deep, large diameter tunnels and vast reservoirs designed to reduce flooding, improve water quality in Chicago area waterways and protect Lake Michigan from pollution caused by sewer overflows.

However, heavy rains in 2019, 2020 and 2023, necessitated opening the River and Harbor locks to effectively reverse the flow of the Chicago River to allow rising water from the river to enter Lake Michigan. Opening the locks is a step that is rarely taken, and is only done at times when water levels on the river are threatening homes and businesses.



## KEY INITIATIVES

The following plans and actions are key to strengthening Chicago’s resiliency in the face of climate change and lessening negative impacts the city has on the natural environment.

### Climate Action Plan

The City of Chicago developed the 2022 Climate Action Plan to combat the negative impacts of climate change and support the resiliency of vulnerable communities.

The Plan commits Chicago to achieve a 62% overall reduction in GHG emissions by 2040 and power 100% of its buildings through renewable energy by 2035.



### Chicago Smart Lighting Program

The City plans to replace more than 270,000 outdated high-pressure sodium street light fixtures with new energy efficient LED lights, which is more than 50% complete, resulting in a reduction of 70 million kilowatt hours of energy, equivalent to \$3.4 million.



### Cumulative Impact Assessment

The City and community partners recently completed the first citywide Cumulative Impact Assessment to provide data on how environmental burdens and other stressors vary in impact across the city.

Co-led and co-designed with people and organizations who live with these issues every day, the assessment identifies neighborhoods that experience the greatest cumulative impacts and provides strategies and actionable policy recommendations to guide decision-making on land use/ zoning, permitting, enforcement, transportation planning, and more.



## Planning and Design for Open Spaces

The Grant Park Framework Plan is in the process of being updated and design is underway for DuSable Park, an undeveloped 3.4 acre peninsular of reclaimed land located along the lakefront on the north side of the Chicago River.

Additional open spaces are being implemented in the near future such as part of the Wild Mile and as part of privately owned riverfront developments, see Appendix for more information.

## City Ordinances & Policies

City ordinances requiring or encouraging sustainable development and other mitigating methods are supporting climate resiliency in the Central Area and city overall.

### ■ 2022 ENERGY

#### **TRANSFORMATION CODE:**

Chicago's 2022 Energy Transformation Code regulates and incentivizes energy conservation requirements for new and remodeled buildings.

### ■ ELECTRIC VEHICLE PARKING:

In 2020, the City of Chicago adopted an ordinance requiring electric vehicle parking to represent at least 20% of the spaces in new residential buildings with five or more spaces and new commercial buildings with 30 or more spaces.

### ■ STORMWATER

#### **MANAGEMENT POLICY:**

In 2016, the City adopted an updated stormwater management policy to encourage and promote programs that minimize negative impacts of new development and redevelopment; protect and conserve land and water resources; and prevent pollution of local waters, groundwater and land.

### ■ SUSTAINABLE

#### **DEVELOPMENT POLICY:**

In 2004, the City established the Chicago Sustainable Development Policy to require development projects receiving financial assistance or special approvals to include sustainability features. The policy was updated in 2016 to enable more opportunities to achieve compliance through emerging technologies, and another update is currently being developed that will include bird-friendly design requirements.

### ■ BUILDING ENERGY

#### **USE BENCHMARKING:**

Chicago's Building Energy Use Benchmarking Ordinance requires existing commercial, institutional, and residential buildings larger than 50,000 square feet to track whole-building energy use, report to the city annually, and verify data accuracy every three years.

### ■ CONNECTED

#### **COMMUNITIES ORDINANCE (CCO):**

In 2022, the City adopted zoning code reforms reflecting principles of the ETOD Policy Plan and intended to advance equitable development and thriving neighborhoods near transit. The CCO includes provisions related to creating jobs and allowing for more homes and businesses near transit; improving the safety of streets and sidewalks near transit and encouraging walking, biking and rolling; and increasing housing opportunity, affordability and accessibility.

## PILLAR 5

# Housing & Neighborhoods

The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update





# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Nearly 95,000 households call the Central Area home.

Proximity to jobs, unique cultural and dining experiences, transit connectivity, and walkability make the area one of the most attractive urban living environments

in the nation, particularly for young professionals. Downtown Chicago is one of the densest areas in the nation and most of the housing stock is in high-rise multifamily buildings. It is

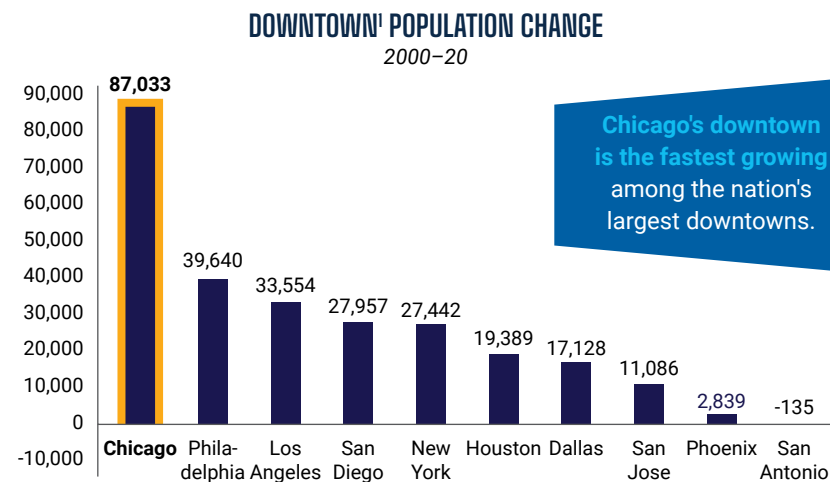
more expensive to rent or own a home downtown than in any other part of the city. Multiple initiatives are underway to support the creation of units that are affordable and family friendly.

## ASSETS

### Fast Growing Downtown

Chicago's downtown population grew by nearly 90,000 people from 2000 to 2020, making it the fastest growing downtown relative to its national peers.

Today, it is the country's most populous downtown, as defined by Brookings, up from sixth at the turn of the 21st century.



Source: Esri, US Census Bureau, SB Friedman

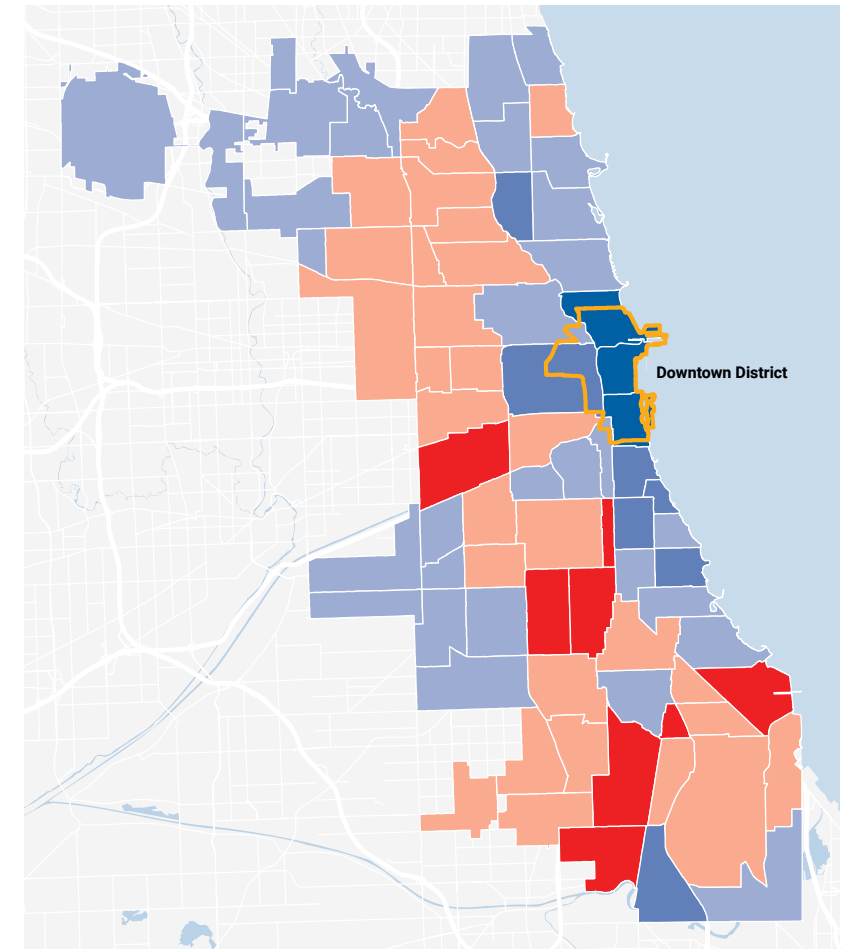
1. Downtown is defined as the original Central Business District (CBD) identified in the 1982 Census of Retail Trade as well as all 2020 census tracts that share a boundary with the 1982 CBD geography.

From 2010 to 2020, downtown community areas increased by 50,000 people. Meanwhile, nearly half of the city's community areas, especially on the South and West sides, lost population.

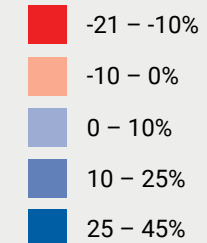
### COMMUNITY AREAS WITH THE MOST POPULATION CHANGE 2010-20

COMMUNITY AREA	POPULATION CHANGE
The Loop	+44.5%
Near South Side	+34.6%
Near North Side	+31.1%
Burnside	-13.3%
West Englewood	-16.5%
Englewood	-20.5%

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, City of Chicago, SB Friedman



### POPULATION CHANGE 2010-20



**Community areas downtown have the highest population growth** while nearly half of Chicago's community areas lost population in the previous decade.

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, City of Chicago, SB Friedman





## Desirable Place to Live

The lively arts, entertainment and dining scene, accessible waterfronts, education and enrichment opportunities, and stunning architecture make the Central Area a desirable place to live.

Downtown residents also have easy access to the robust public transportation network and pedestrian-friendly streets.

More than 44% of households in the Loop and Near North community areas do not own a car compared to 26% citywide.

## Strong Housing Market

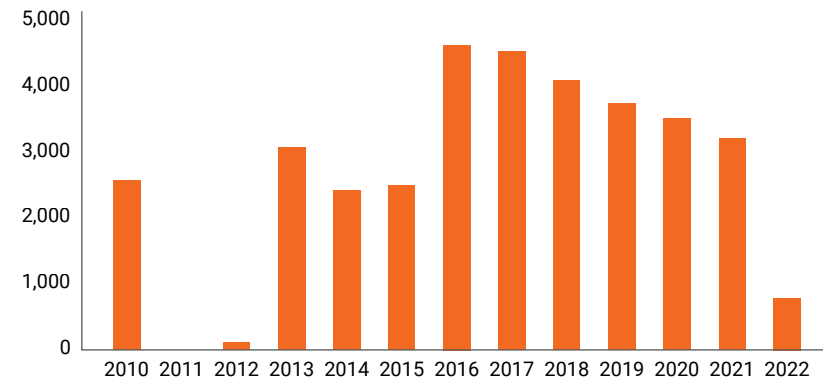
Private investment in new downtown housing has surged in the last 20 years.

Approximately 60% of real estate investment in the Central Area from 2010 to 2022 was residential, according to City of Chicago building permit data.

Today, the 95,000 occupied units downtown are overwhelmingly located in multifamily buildings. Approximately 40% of these units are owner-occupied, most of which, nearly 30,000 units, were developed between 2000 to 2010. A shift in downtown development to rental housing occurred in 2010. Since that time, more than 35,000 multifamily rental units, an average of 2,930 units annually, have been developed downtown.

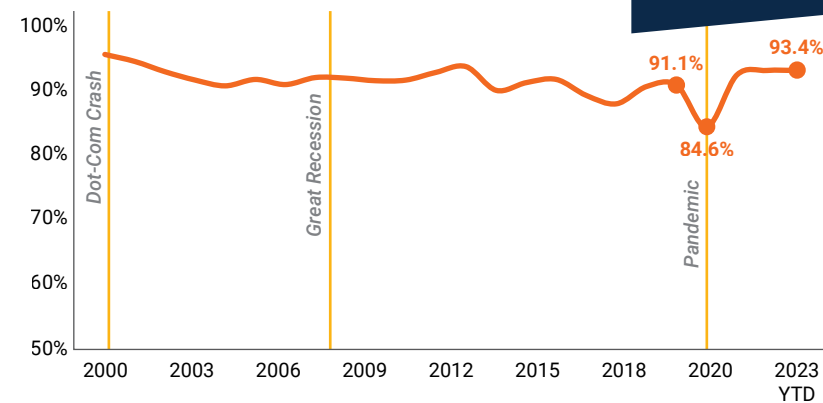
Rental occupancy has remained strong over the last 10 years. There was a dip at the height of the pandemic, but it recovered to more than 93% occupancy as of early 2023. The market for new housing options remains strong in 2023, with nearly 7,900 new units under construction.

MULTIFAMILY RENTAL UNIT DELIVERIES  
2010–2022, Downtown District



Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

RENTAL MULTIFAMILY OCCUPANCY  
Downtown District



Source: CoStar



## CHALLENGES

### Black, Latino and Native American Residents are Underrepresented

The Central Area has a much higher concentration of white residents compared to the city overall.

Only 10% of downtown residents identify as Black, compared to 30% citywide. A similar discrepancy exists for Native American, Hispanic and Latino residents.

RACE AND ETHNICITY OF RESIDENTS  
2020

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT	CITYWIDE	DIFFERENCE
<b>RACE</b>			
White	62%	36%	+26%
Black or African American	10%	29%	-19%
Asian	18%	7%	+11%
American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander <sup>1</sup>	2%	16%	-14%
Two or More Race Groups	7%	11%	-4%
<b>ETHNICITY</b>			
Hispanic or Latino	7%	30%	-23%
Not Hispanic or Latino	92%	70%	+22%

Source: Esri, City of Chicago, US Census Bureau (2020), SB Friedman

1. Also includes Some Other Race Alone



## Fewer Housing Units Suitable for Families

The Central Area has significantly higher shares of studio and one-bedroom units compared to citywide averages.

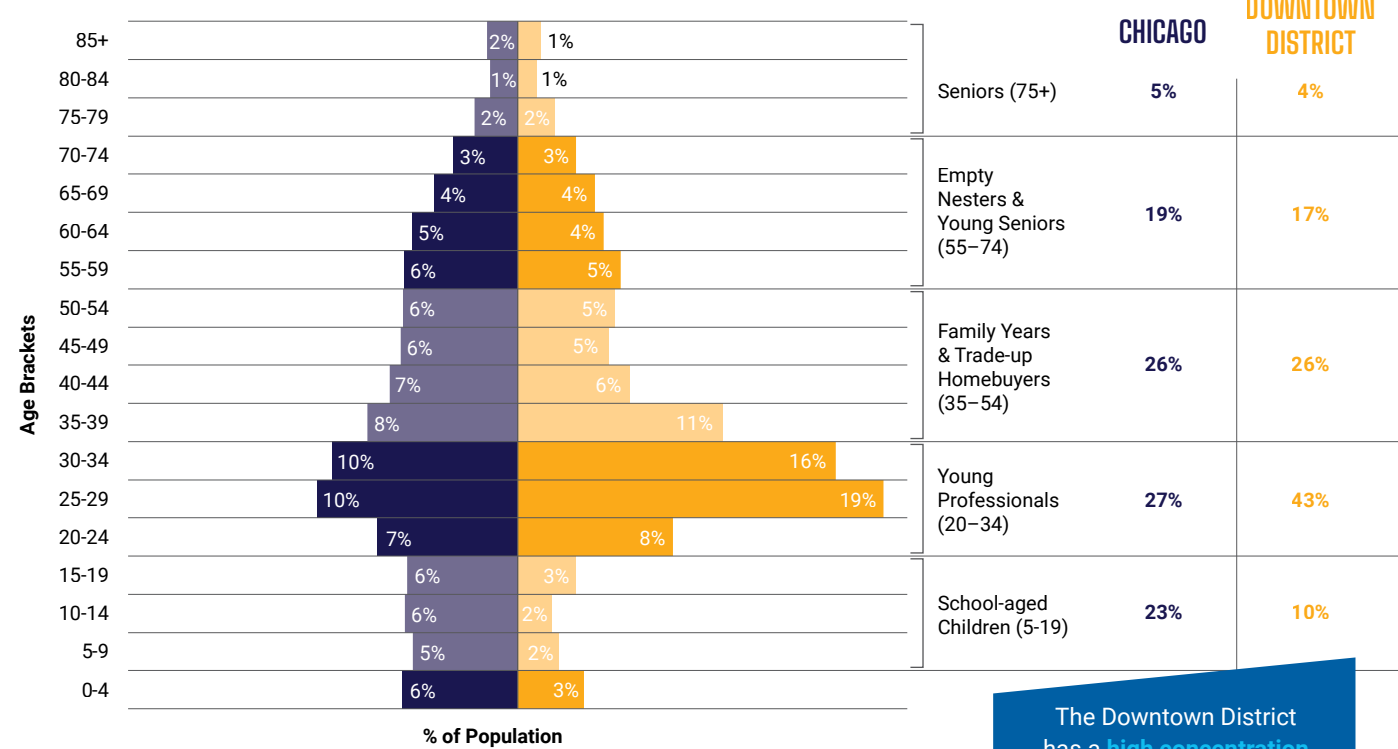
The concentration of smaller units is consistent with the area's younger household profile compared to the rest of the city. More than 40% of downtown residents are 20 to 34 years old and only 10% are school-aged. Both percentages deviate significantly from citywide averages.

HOUSING SUPPLY BY NUMBER OF BEDROOMS  
2021

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT	CITYWIDE EXCLUDING THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
Studio (0 bedrooms)	15%	5%
1 Bedroom	41%	18%
2 or 3 Bedrooms	42%	63%
4+ Bedrooms	2%	14%
Total	100%	100%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, SB Friedman

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY AGE  
2021



The Downtown District has a high concentration of young professionals and a low concentration of school-aged children.

## Lack of Affordable Units

### High Rents

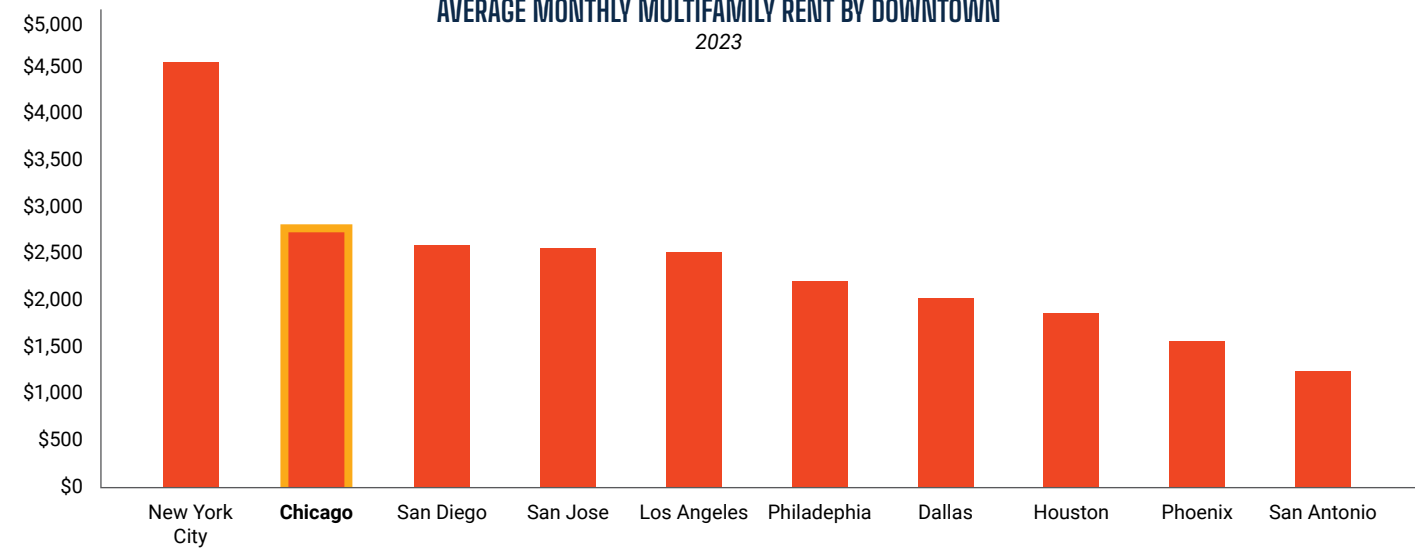
Among downtowns of the 10 largest cities, Chicago's average multifamily rent in 2023 was most similar to that of San Diego, San Jose, and Los Angeles, which ranged from \$2,500 to \$2,750 per month.

Downtown New York City had the highest rent at more than \$4,500 and downtown San Antonio the lowest, at around \$1,250.

The average studio rent downtown is more than \$1,800 per month. Two-bedroom units rent for about \$3,300 on average, requiring an income of at least \$130,000 to be considered affordable.

Given the large share of small, expensive units, the downtown residential market attracts only a subset of Chicago's population. Downtown households are therefore younger, smaller in size, and wealthier than citywide averages. Nearly 40% of downtown households earn more than \$150,000 annually, compared to less than 20% of households citywide.

AVERAGE MONTHLY MULTIFAMILY RENT BY DOWNTOWN  
2023



Source: CoStar, SB Friedman

ALL MULTIFAMILY RENTAL PRODUCT  
2022

	STUDIO	1-BED	2-BED
Average Rent	\$1,825	\$2,274	\$3,293
Affordable Household Income	\$73,008	\$90,963	\$131,724

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, CoStar, SB Friedman

55% of citywide households can't afford a studio apartment in the Downtown District.

SHARE OF HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS  
2021

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT	CITYWIDE
Under the age of 35	45%	28%
Avg. (weighted) household size	1.6	2.0
Earning more than \$150,000	39%	19%

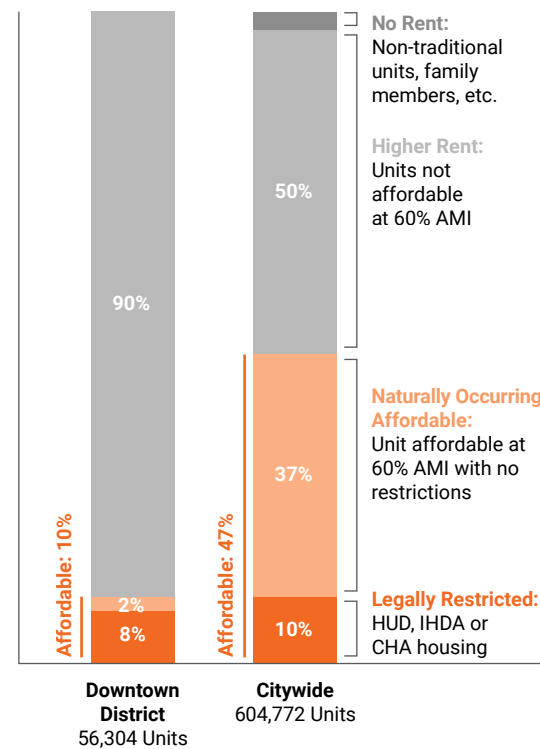
Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, SB Friedman



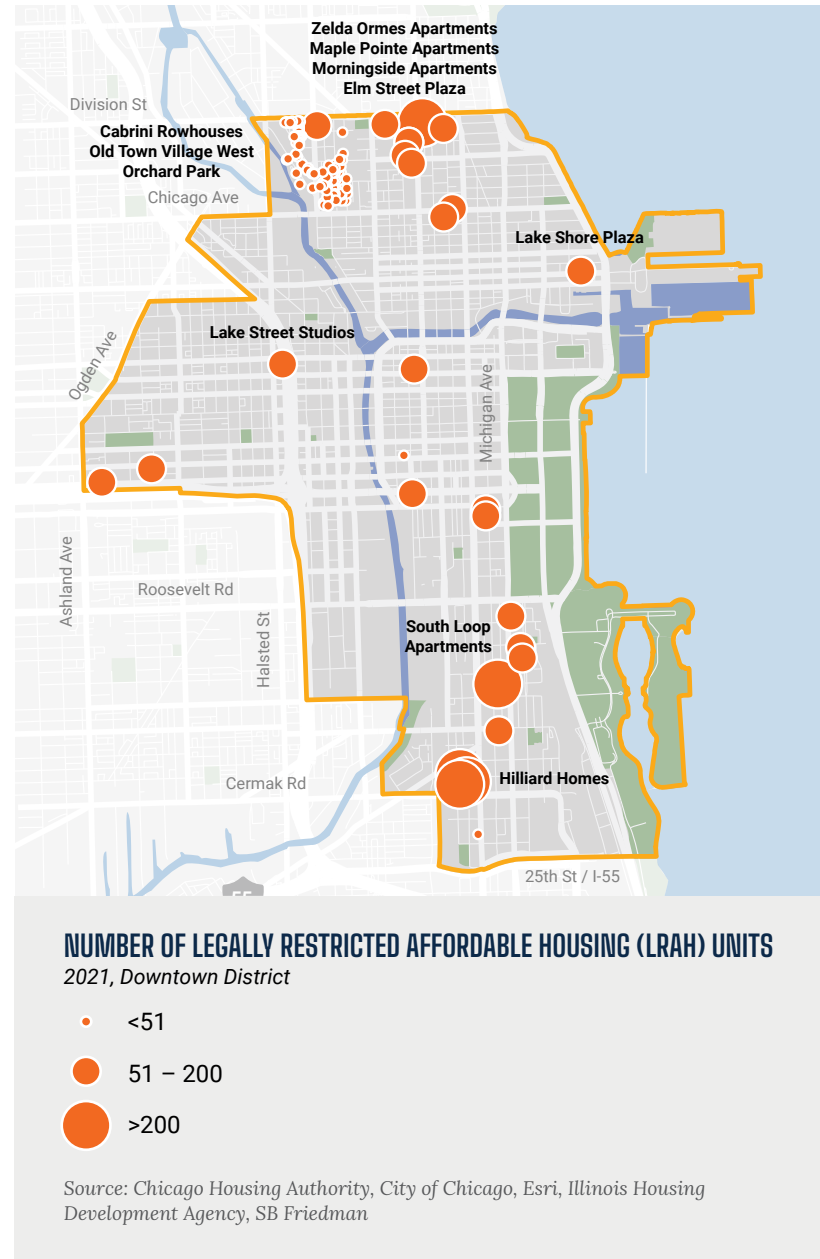
## Limited Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing

About 10% of rental units downtown are affordable for households earning 60% of the area median income (AMI), which translates to about \$53,000 per year for a two-person household.

Citywide, 47% of rental units are affordable at this level. Almost all of the affordable units in the Central Area are subsidized with public financial resources that mandate a 30-year affordability period for tenants earning up to 60% AMI. Less than 2% of the affordable units are known as naturally occurring affordable housing (NOAH), with market-driven rents.



Source: Chicago Housing Authority, City of Chicago, Esri, Illinois Housing Development Agency, US Census Bureau, SB Friedman



## People Experiencing Homelessness

Every year in late January, the Chicago Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS) and its partners survey and tally the number of residents experiencing homelessness in homeless shelters, encampments and other unsheltered areas not meant for human habitation.

This Point-in-Time (PIT) Count serves as a one-night snapshot to estimate the number of families, individuals and children experiencing homelessness in Chicago.

The 2023 Point-In-Time Count was conducted on Thursday, January 26, 2023. Overall, there were 6,139 people identified as experiencing homelessness with 5,149 people residing in shelters and 990 people staying in unsheltered locations not meant for human habitation.

Prior to 2023, Chicago had seen a gradual decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Chicago since

2015, but the 2023 count was increased from 2022, largely driven by a greater number of people residing in shelters.

A major change in 2023's count was the inclusion of new arrivals, or South American asylum seekers arriving in Chicago, many bused to Chicago since August 2022. Overall, there were 2,176 new arrival families and individuals residing in emergency shelters the night of the count.





**KEY INITIATIVES**

**Affordable Requirements Ordinance**

The Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) is an inclusionary housing policy that requires new residential buildings with 10 or more units that receive City of Chicago assistance to make 20% of the total units available to households earning up to 60% AMI.

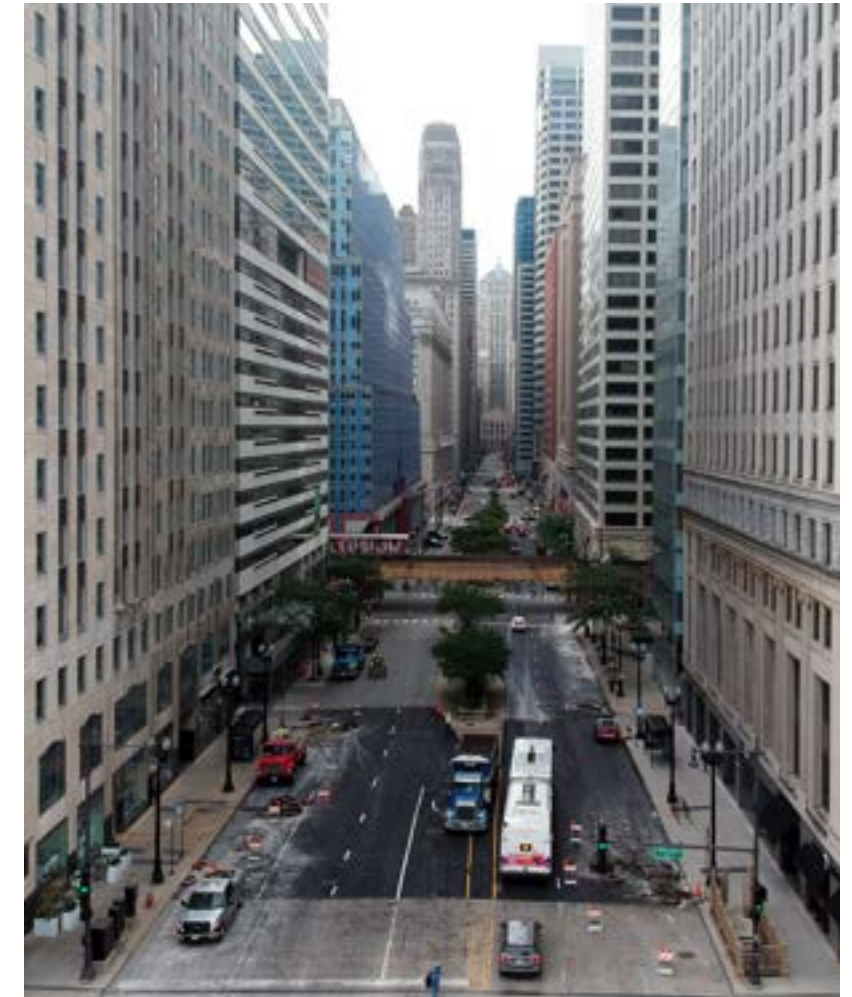
Of the 400 legally restricted ARO units created citywide since 2007, 80 are located in the Central Area. To date, more than 2,500 ARO units are pending or under construction in the Central Area.



**Additional Public-Private Partnerships**

DPD and DOH have initiated several partnerships with Fulton Market and LaSalle Street corridor property owners to further increase on-site affordability to 30%.

These proposals, if implemented, would create hundreds of affordable housing units in some of the most expensive areas of downtown, while potentially reducing the glut of Class C office space in the central Loop through residential conversions.



**Qualified Allocation Plan**

The City's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) supports development and rehabilitation of affordable housing with the use of 9% and 4% Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and tax-exempt bonds.

Several new residential projects are using these funding sources to preserve and create hundreds of affordable units, including the Lawson House YMCA on West Chicago Avenue and the Southbridge development on South State Street.



**Permanent Supportive and Temporary Housing**

Several ongoing initiatives, funded by the Chicago Recovery Plan and HUD, continue to strengthen homeless outreach, provide rapid access to permanent housing, support services and other measures.

Housing for the thousands of asylum-seekers is a rapidly evolving situation, with new temporary shelters being set up citywide, including several sites in the Central Area.

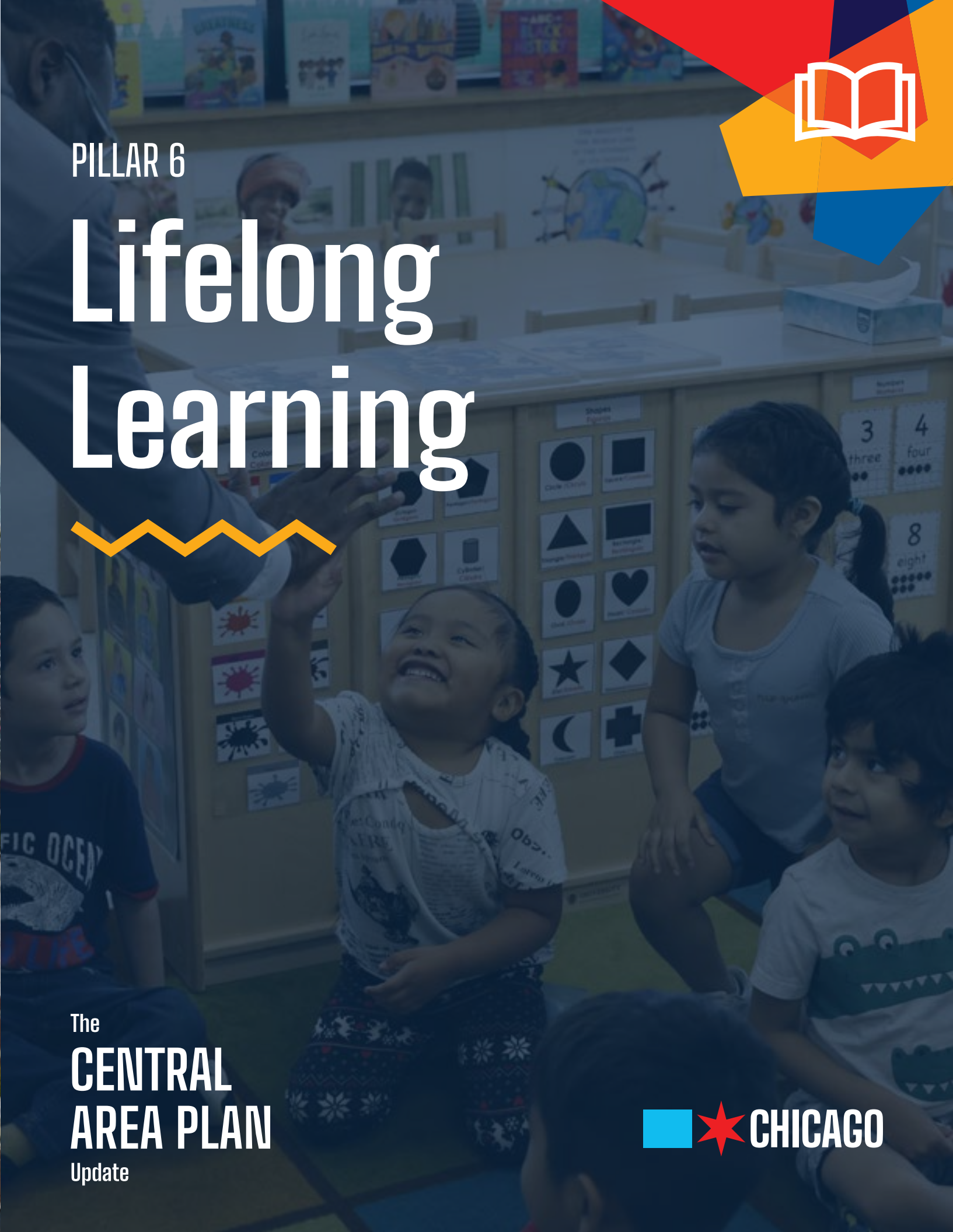


Households in the Downtown District are younger, smaller in size, wealthier, and less diverse compared to households Citywide.



PILLAR 6

# Lifelong Learning



The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update





# LIFELONG LEARNING



The dense concentration of elementary and high schools, technical and trade schools, and colleges and universities make the Central Area both a destination for learning and a source of talent for the region’s economy.

The Central Area also offers enrichment opportunities through programs and activities at its many museums, arts and cultural institutions, libraries, and mission-based non-profit organizations.

## ASSETS

### Educational Attainment

Residents in the Central Area are well-educated. More than 80% of adults 25 years or older possess a bachelor’s or higher degree, nearly double the share of college degree holders citywide.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT<sup>1</sup>  
2021

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT	CITYWIDE
High School Graduate (or Equivalent)	5%	22%
Associate Degree	2%	6%
Bachelor’s Degree	40%	24%
Graduate or Professional Degree	43%	18%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Esri, SB Friedman

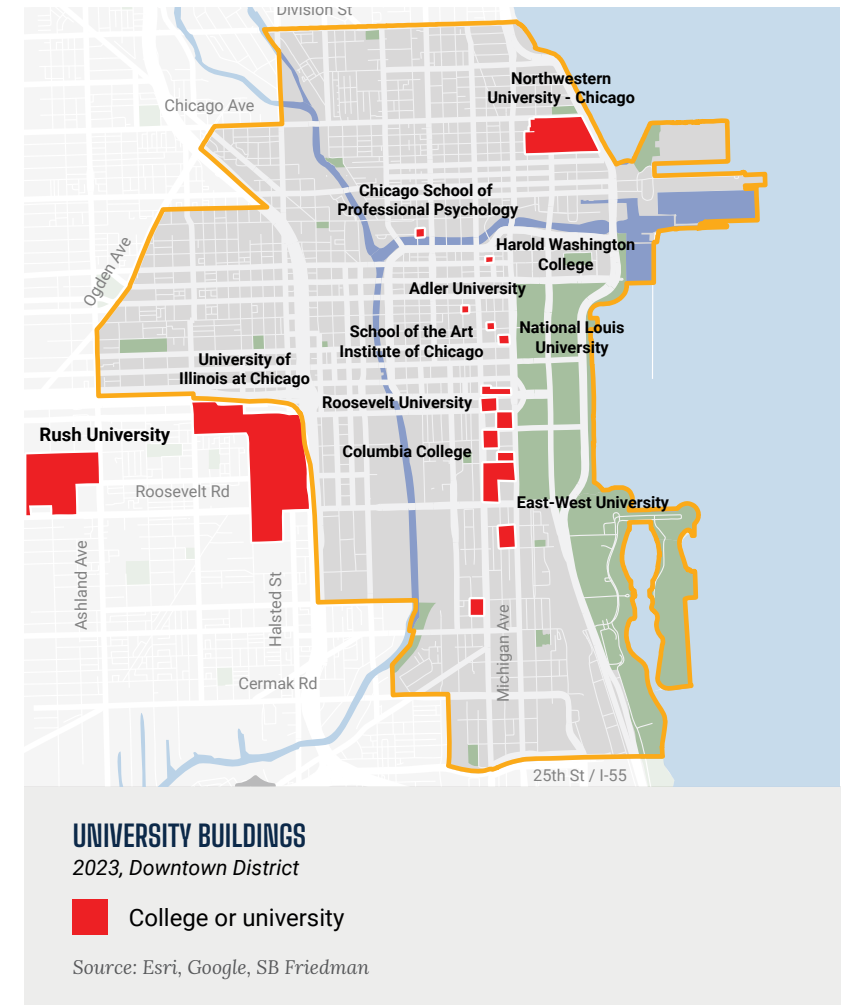
1. Remaining share of the population age 25 older did not earn a degree or had some college

## Colleges and Universities

The 20 largest colleges and universities in Chicago enrolled nearly 210,000 students in 2018 – one of the highest concentrations of college students in the nation.

Many have their main campuses in the Central Area or have satellite campuses downtown. More than 31,000 students are enrolled in colleges and universities with a main campus downtown, representing nearly 15% of all college students taking classes citywide. Many area institutions are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in capital projects while also supporting hundreds of business startups.

More than 21,000 graduate and undergraduate students live downtown, many utilizing an estimated 5,800 beds located in student dormitories.



ENROLLED STUDENTS LIVING IN THE DOWNTOWN DISTRICT  
2021

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
College, Undergraduate	10,998
Graduate, Professional School	10,476
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,474</b>

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, SB Friedman

More than 21,000 college and graduate students live in the Downtown District.

ENROLLMENT AT COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES DOWNTOWN<sup>1</sup>  
Fall 2021

INSTITUTION	ENROLLMENT
<b>PUBLIC</b>	
Harold Washington College (City Colleges)	5,750
<b>PRIVATE, NON-PROFIT</b>	
Adler University	1,864
School of the Art Institute of Chicago	3,559
The Chicago School of Professional Psychology at Chicago	1,297
Columbia College Chicago	6,736
East-West University	487
National Louis University	7,315
Roosevelt University	4,127
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,125</b>

Source: Chicago Loop Alliance, Esri, National Center for Education Statistics, SB Friedman

1. Showing only colleges and universities with main campuses Downtown



# Elementary and High Schools

More than 6,700 elementary and high school students live downtown.

There are six public and nine private elementary schools located downtown.

Among the 5,100 kindergarten through 8th grade students living in the area, 50% attend a public school, compared to 83% citywide.

Seven public and nine private high schools are located downtown, attracting students from across the city. Among the 1,500 enrolled high school students living in the area, 77% attend a public school, compared to 86% of students living citywide.

### ENROLLED ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

2021

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT	CITYWIDE
Grades K-8	5,169	273,876
Attends Public School	2,601	227,431
% In Public School	50%	83%

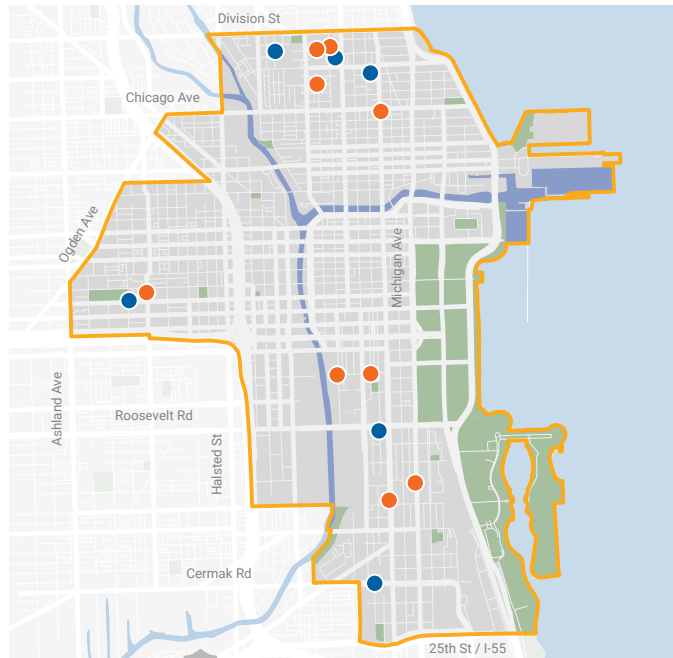
### ENROLLED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

2021

	DOWNTOWN DISTRICT	CITYWIDE
Grades 9-12	1,515	123,857
Attends Public School	1,166	106,456
% In Public School	77%	86%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Public Schools, City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Public Schools, City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

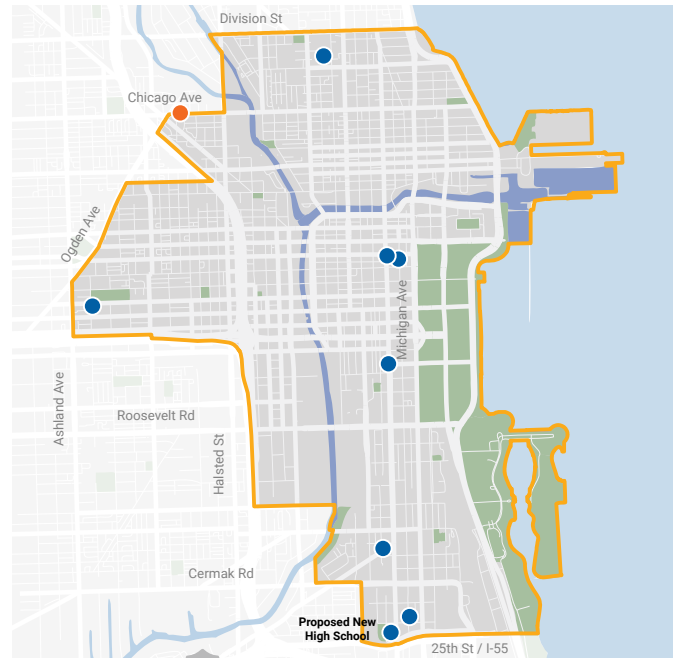


### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

2023, Downtown District

● Public ● Private

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman



### HIGH SCHOOLS

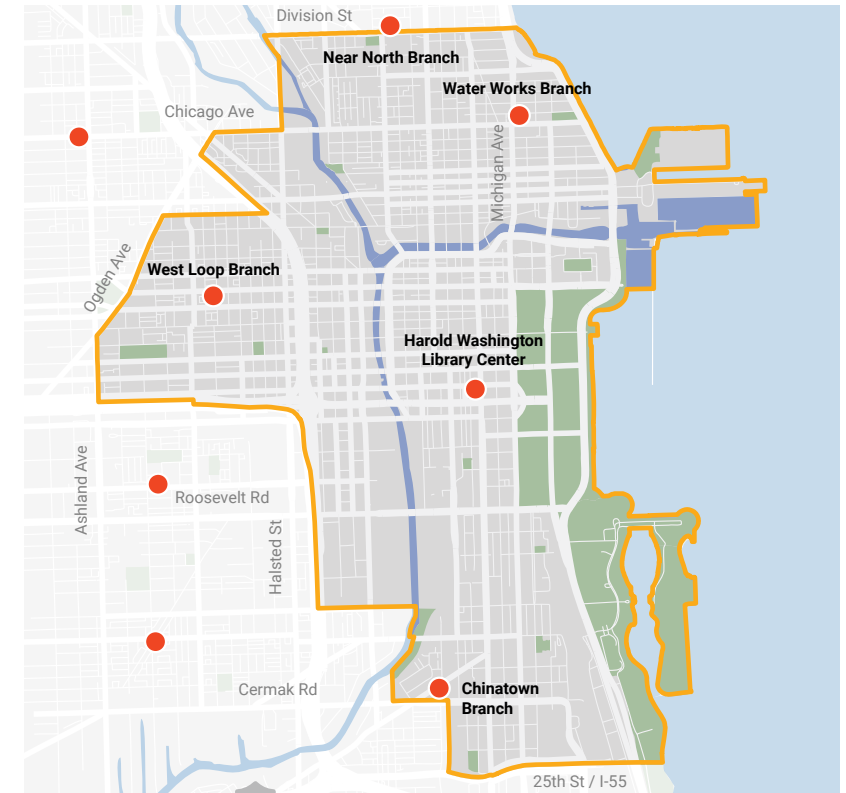
2023, Downtown District

● Public ● Private

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

# Chicago Public Library

Five public libraries are located downtown, including the city's central library at the Harold Washington Library Center, also the Chinatown Branch, which opened in 2015, and the West Loop Branch, which opened in 2019.



### PUBLIC LIBRARIES

2023, Downtown District

● Public Library

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman





## Other Organizations and Programs Offering Enrichment Programs

Many downtown cultural institutions and special interest organizations offer Chicago residents learning and enrichment experiences through a variety of formal and casual activities that enhance personal awareness, knowledge and ability.

For example:

- **AFTER SCHOOL MATTERS (ASM)** offers free programming for Chicago teens after school and throughout the summer in dance, photography, social organizing, public speaking, martial arts, architecture and other subjects.
- **THE OSHER INSTITUTE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING (OLLI)** offers memberships to older adults through Northwestern University, providing approximately 90 different study groups each semester in a variety of subjects.
- **CLASSIC ENCOUNTER** is a Chicago Symphony Orchestra subscription program held before concerts where participants discuss the intersection of various forms of musical styles, performers and composers.



## CHALLENGES

### Declining Enrollment

Five of the eight colleges and universities with main campuses downtown experienced a decline in enrollment from 2010 to 2022.

Harold Washington College, one of Chicago's City Colleges, had approximately 5,750 students enrolled in 2021, a nearly 3,000 student decline since 2010. McKinsey & Company's 2020 research suggests that the decline will continue into the future, impacting the higher education sector in the Central Area.



### Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Facilities Efficiencies

As of the 2023 school year and data available, three of the CPS elementary schools downtown are being used efficiently and three are underutilized.

The three downtown selective enrollment CPS high schools are all categorized as overcrowded.







### KEY INITIATIVES

## Proposed New School

Chicago Public Schools is exploring the possibility of developing a new neighborhood high school on the site of a former public housing complex near 24th and State Streets in the Near South Side to bring increased educational opportunities to this growing and diverse community.

## Workforce Training Organizations

Many workforce training organizations headquartered downtown offer citywide workshops focused on basic adult education, skills training, financial literacy and other subjects.

More than 100,000 individuals have been served through such groups since 1983. The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership and other downtown organizations help bridge connections between citywide schools and employers. For example, the Genesys Works program has placed more than 1,100 high school students with paid internships downtown since 2010.

### PILLAR 7

# Public Health & Safety



The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update







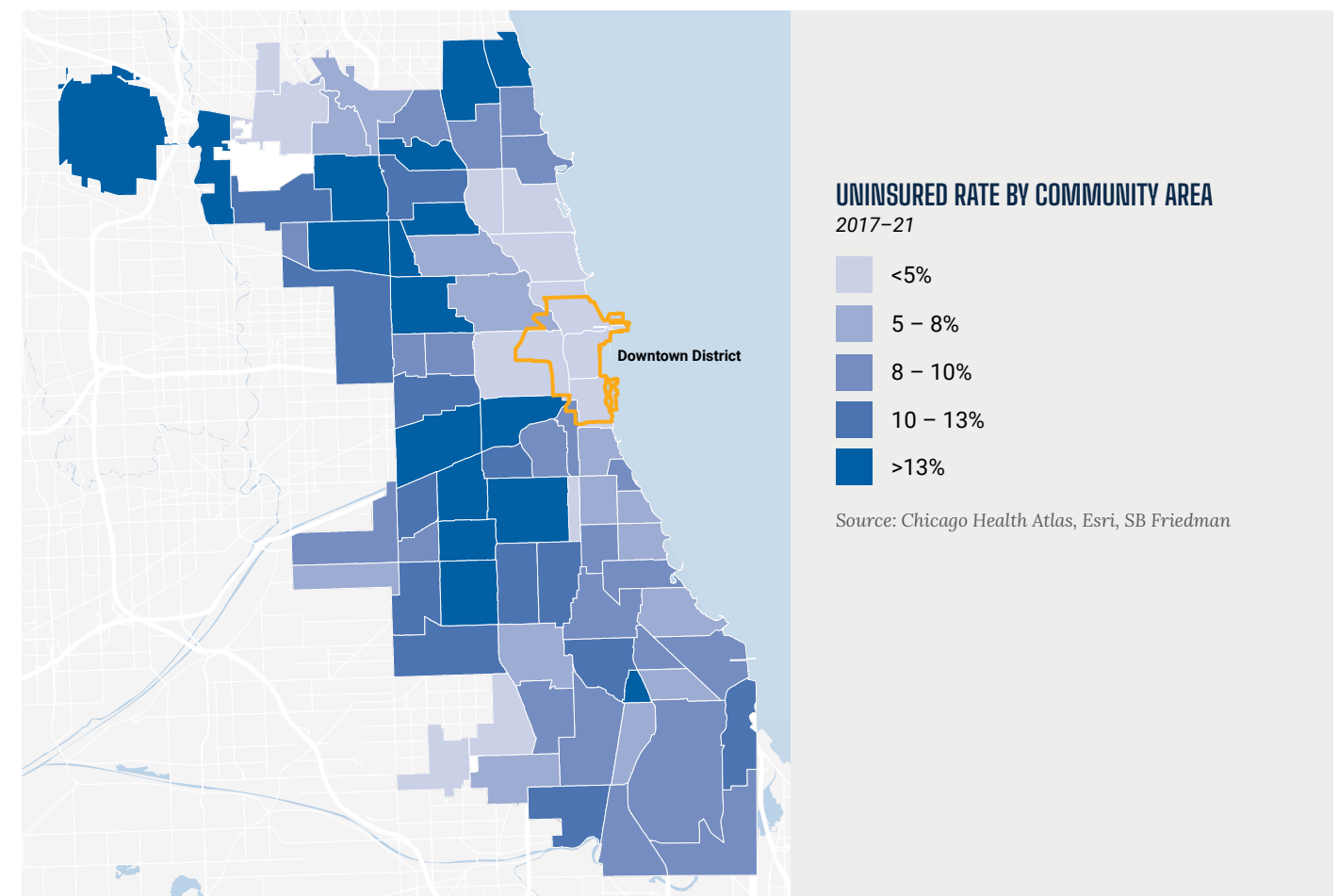
# PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Public health and safety are essential components of a community’s livability. In a recent survey conducted by the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) in 2021-22, nine out of 10 downtown area residents ranked their overall health as good, very good or excellent.

This is partially driven by residents’ access to healthcare within the Central Area. In the CDPH survey, most downtown residents reported feeling safe most of the time, however the rate was lower compared to a similar survey conducted five years earlier.



## ASSETS



## Access to Healthcare

The Central Area is well-served by major medical institutions like Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Lurie Children's Hospital, the nearby Illinois Medical District, and numerous smaller clinics and urgent care centers.

Residents of downtown community areas are more likely to have health insurance, with the percentage of uninsured residents among the lowest in the city.



## Health Outcomes

Downtown residents tend to have better health outcomes than Chicago residents overall, including lower obesity and hypertension rates, as well as higher rates for dental cleanings, according to the Chicago Health Atlas.

Central Area residents have high life expectancies compared to citywide averages. According to the Chicago Health Atlas, residents of each community area comprising the Central Area have life expectancies of at least 75 years, with as high as 81 years.

	LOOP	NEAR SOUTH	NEAR NORTH	NEAR WEST	CITYWIDE
<b>Adult Obesity Rate</b>	20.9%	29.5%	11.9%	20.5%	33.7%
<b>Instance of Dental Cleanings</b>	74.6%	75.7%	79.0%	68.1%	60.0%
<b>Hypertension Rate</b>	17.9%	26.0%	18.8%	23.8%	28.5%

Source: Chicago Health Atlas (2021-2022)

**Downtown District tends to perform better** on public health matters than the rest of the city overall.

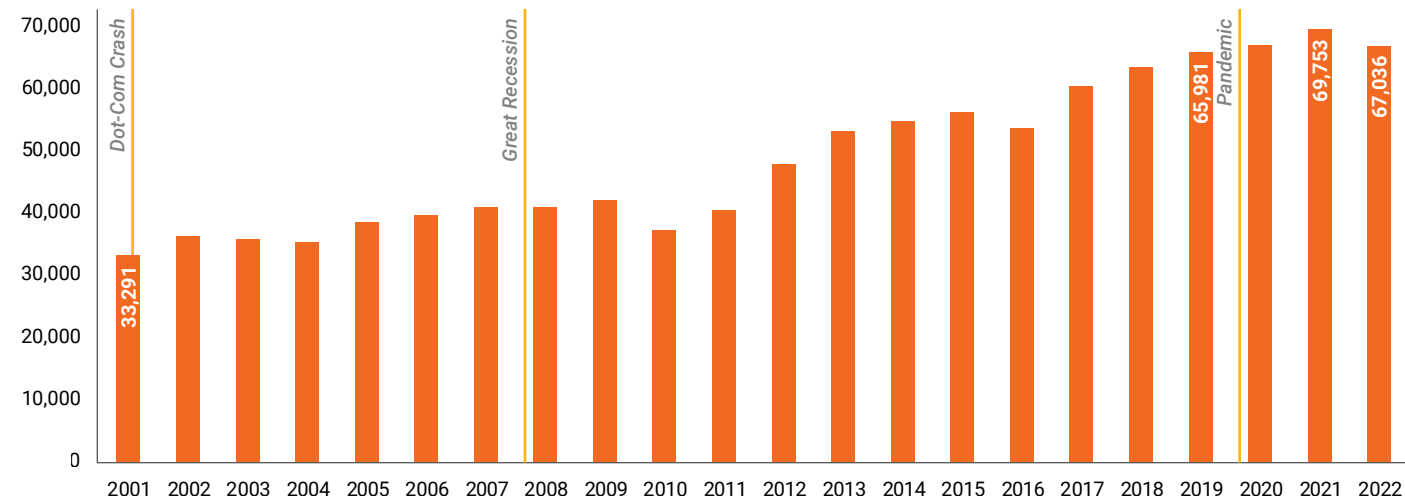
## Healthcare and Social Assistance Job Growth

Healthcare and social assistance is the fastest growing economic sector in the Central Area.

Since 2001, the number of private sector jobs in the sector doubled from 33,000 to more than 67,000 jobs in 2022, accounting for 12%

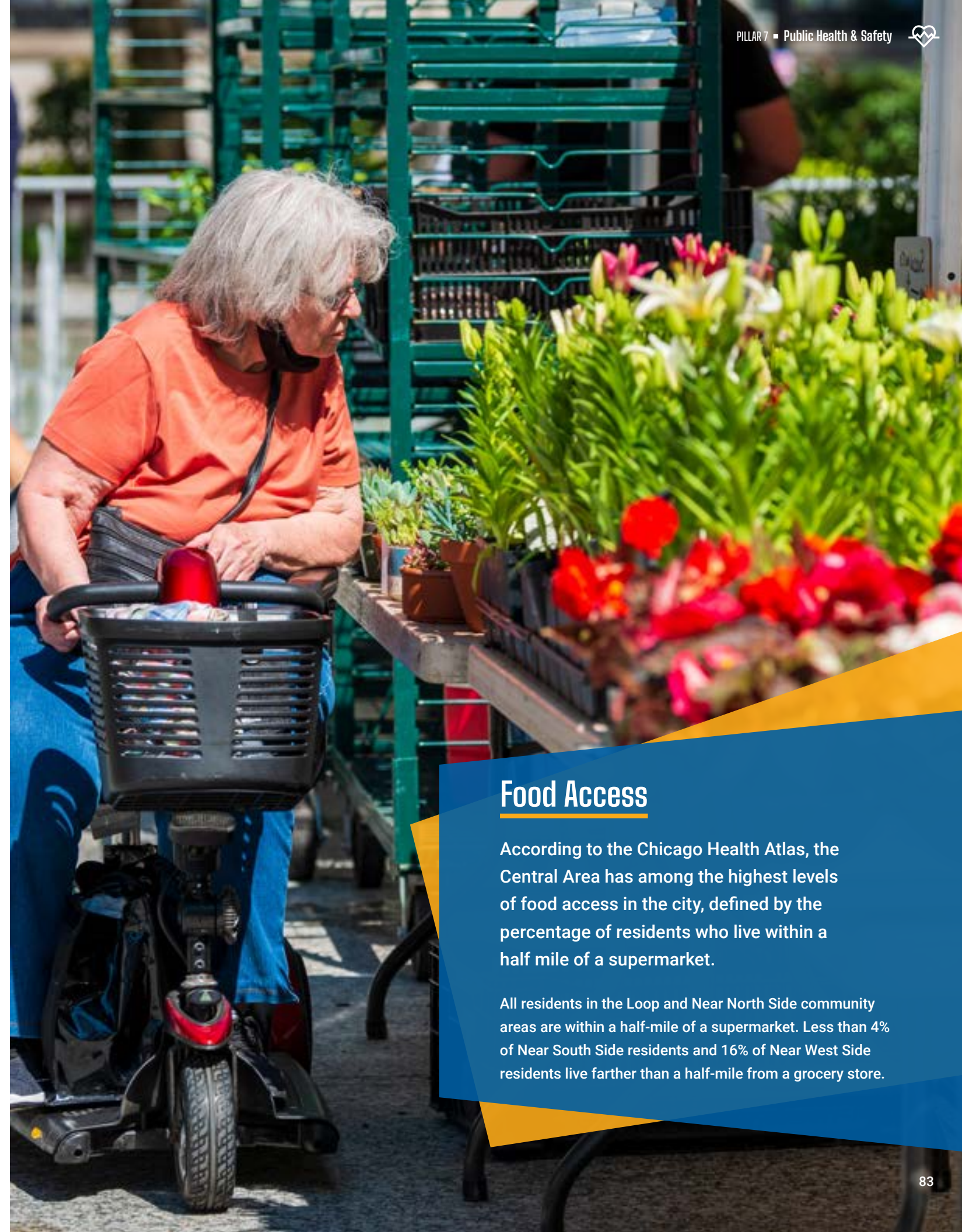
of total private sector jobs in ZIP codes overlapping the Central Area.

**HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE JOB GROWTH**  
Downtown District



Source: Illinois Department of Employment Security, SB Friedman

Downtown District Zip Codes: 60601, 60602, 60603, 60604, 60605, 60606, 60607, 60610, 60611, 60616, 60654, 60661



## Food Access

According to the Chicago Health Atlas, the Central Area has among the highest levels of food access in the city, defined by the percentage of residents who live within a half mile of a supermarket.

All residents in the Loop and Near North Side community areas are within a half-mile of a supermarket. Less than 4% of Near South Side residents and 16% of Near West Side residents live farther than a half-mile from a grocery store.



## CHALLENGES

### Mental Health

According to Mental Health America’s Mental Health Risk Assessments (from January 2020–June 2023), the top four ZIP codes with the highest rates of anxiety (700–1,164 per 100,000 residents) in all of Cook County are within the Central Area.

The ZIP codes with the highest shares of residents with depression (1,313-2,474 per 100,000 residents) are also all within the Central Area.

### Opioid Addiction

According to CDPH, in 2017, the opioid overdose death rate was 1.5 times higher in Chicago than in Illinois.

According to CDPH, in 2018, the Near West Side, with 405 instances, had the seventh highest number of opioid overdoses among Chicago

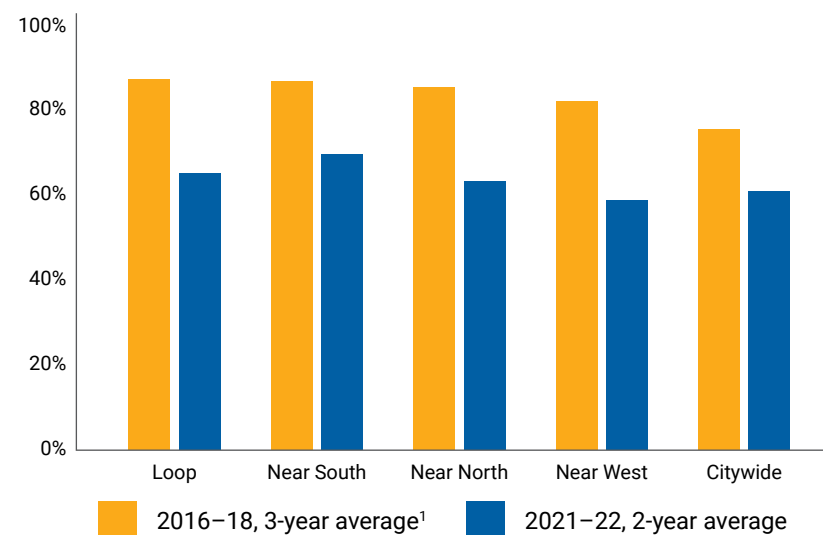
community areas. Opioid overdoses numbered 268 in the Near North Side, 235 in the Loop and 50 in the Near South Side community areas.

### Community Safety

Since the pandemic, the perception of safety in the downtown has declined.

Prior to the pandemic, more than 80% of residents in downtown community areas reported feeling safe most of the time in a survey conducted by the CDPH between 2016–2018. In the 2021–2022 survey, the share of residents reporting feeling safe declined to 60%–70% across different downtown community areas.

PERCENT OF ADULTS WHO REPORT THAT THEY FEEL SAFE IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD "ALL OF THE TIME" OR "MOST OF THE TIME"

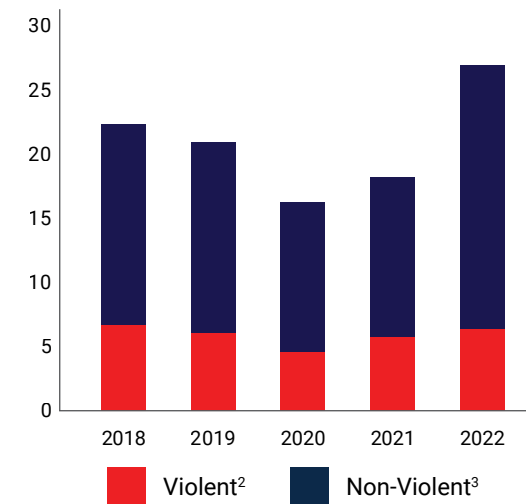


Source: Chicago Health Atlas  
1. 2018 1-year average for Citywide.

This change in perception is reflective of the increased crime rate downtown since the pandemic.

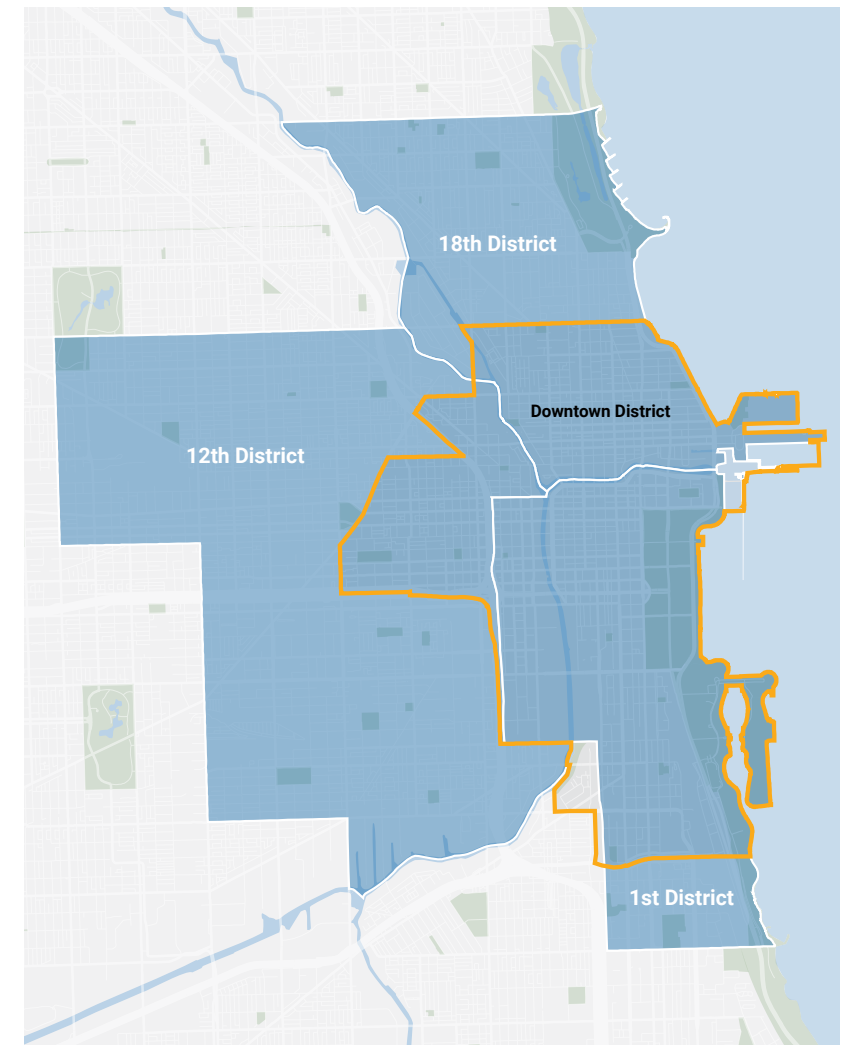
The rate of reported crimes per 1,000 people downtown was trending downward until 2020 before increasing in 2021 and 2022. Non-violent crimes, including burglary, theft and car theft, were significantly higher in 2022.

CRIMES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS IN DOWNTOWN POLICE DISTRICTS<sup>1</sup>



Source: City of Chicago, Chicago Police Department, Esri, SB Friedman

- Police Districts 1, 12, and 18 included in the analysis.
- Violent crimes defined as murder, criminal sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated robbery.
- Non-Violent crimes defined as burglary, theft, and motor vehicle theft.



CHICAGO POLICE DISTRICTS 2023, Downtown District

Police District Boundary

Source: City of Chicago, Chicago Police Department, Esri, SB Friedman





**KEY INITIATIVES**

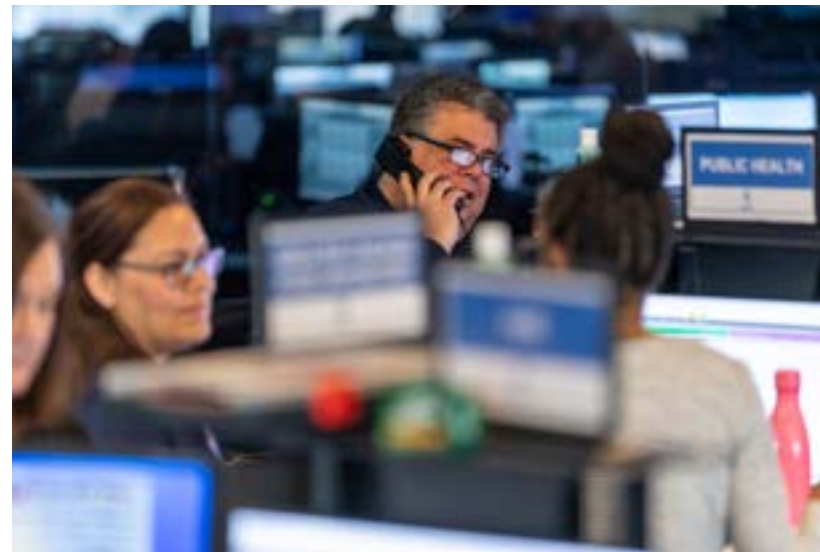
**Healthy Chicago 2025**

Healthy Chicago 2025 was launched in fall 2020 by CDPH to assess and improve health for all Chicagoans, particularly those from low-income and marginalized communities that experience the greatest disparities.



**City of Chicago Funded Mental Health Services**

Recognizing the importance of mental health care, the City of Chicago has significantly expanded access to mental health services, clinics, crisis prevention and resources in the city since 2019.



Currently, five publicly funded clinics providing mental health services are located downtown. Funded by a combination of government agencies, these clinics provide no-barrier mental health services to residents regardless of health insurance status, immigration status or ability to pay. In addition to strengthening access to mental health service locations, the city through the CDPH has initiated a campaign to combat the stigma surrounding mental health.

**Chicago’s Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement Program**

Chicago’s Crisis Assistance Response and Engagement (CARE) program responds to low and moderate risk 911 calls with behavioral health and substance use overdose resources along with regimented follow-ups, seeking to decrease armed

response to those who are experiencing non-violent crises.

Initially launched in 2021, the CARE program is in its pilot stage focusing on specific community areas including the Loop, Near South Side, and portions of the Near West Side in the Central Area.



Downtown District tends to perform better on public health matters than the rest of the city overall.



## Corridor Ambassador Program

Beginning in 2022, select downtown streets began to be patrolled by Corridor Ambassadors, based on the model set by the State Street SSA.

Though Corridor Ambassadors are not tasked with public safety, they have a friendly presence on the street and help discourage unwanted behavior and illegal activity. This program was recently expanded to encompass the area bounded by Dearborn Street, Canal Street, Ida B. Wells Drive and Wacker Drive, as well as the Magnificent Mile corridor in River North and portions of Chinatown.



## Chicago Police Department (CPD) 2023 Strategic Plan

The Chicago Police Department's 2023 strategic plan includes a priority focus on downtown police districts.

Specific concerns include increased focus on retail theft, property damage, vehicle hijackings, robberies, and a curfew for unaccompanied minors in Millennium Park.



PILLAR 8

# Transportation & Infrastructure



The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update



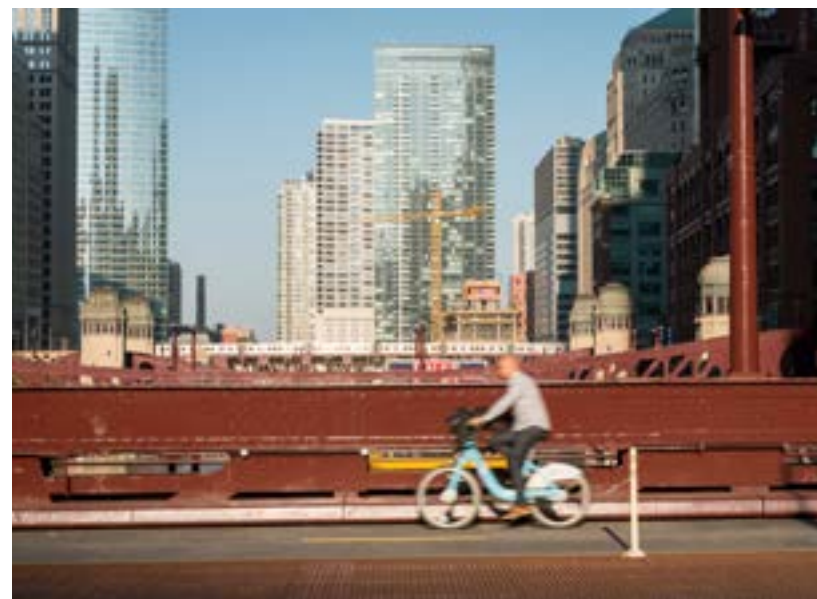


# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Chicago's Central Area is shaped by the convergence of rail lines, bus routes, highways, streets, sidewalks, trails, bike lanes and waterways.

This infrastructure enables the Central Area to thrive by connecting people to jobs, places of learning, health care, arts and cultural opportunities, shopping, dining, and recreation.

The area relies heavily on mass transit to move millions of people each year quickly and efficiently within and beyond its boundaries. Chicago has the second highest number of commuters using public transportation in the country, second only to New York City.



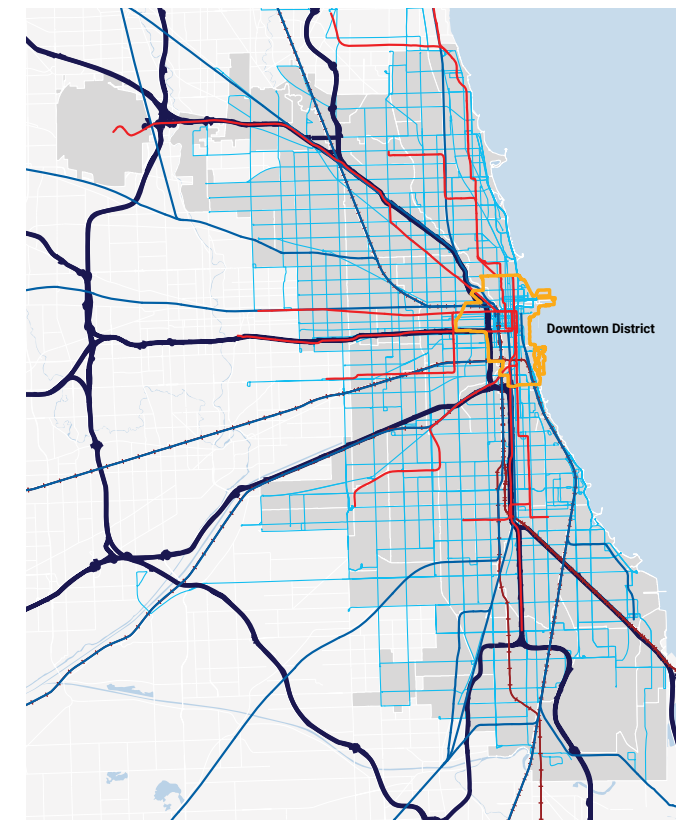
## ASSETS

### Mass Transit

The Central Area is the center of Chicago's hub-and-spoke passenger rail network that extends to the suburbs and beyond.

Five of the eight Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) rail lines converge and loop around the central part of downtown in elevated train tracks, giving the Loop its name. Two additional CTA rail lines

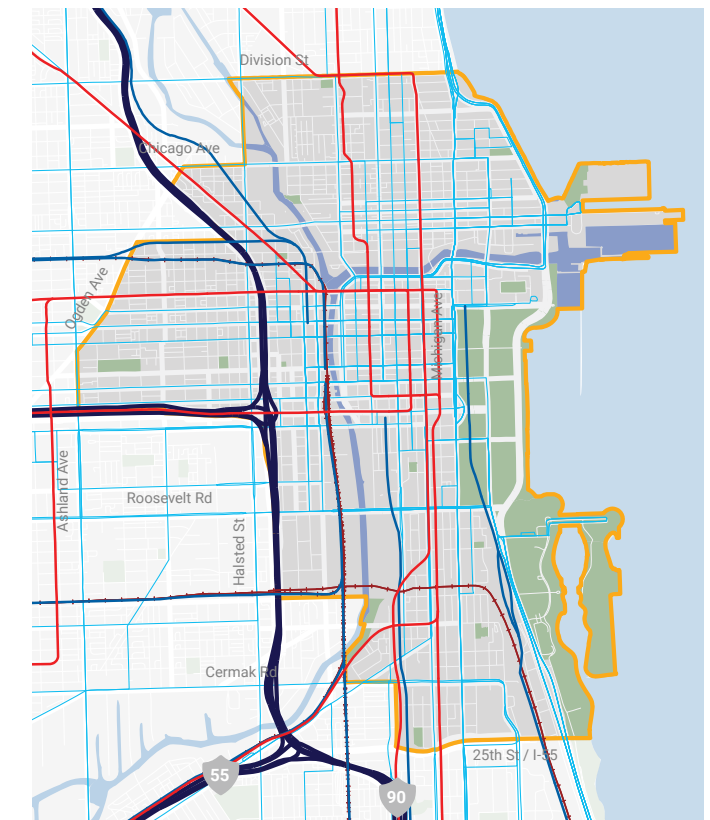
provide access to the Loop by subway. All 11 of Metra's regional commuter lines originate and terminate in one of the Central Area's four commuter rail stations.



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS IN CHICAGO 2023

- CTA Rail
- Metra Rail
- Amtrak Rail
- CTA Bus
- Highway

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman



TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS IN THE CENTRAL AREA 2023

- CTA Rail
- Metra Rail
- Amtrak Rail
- CTA Bus
- Highway

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

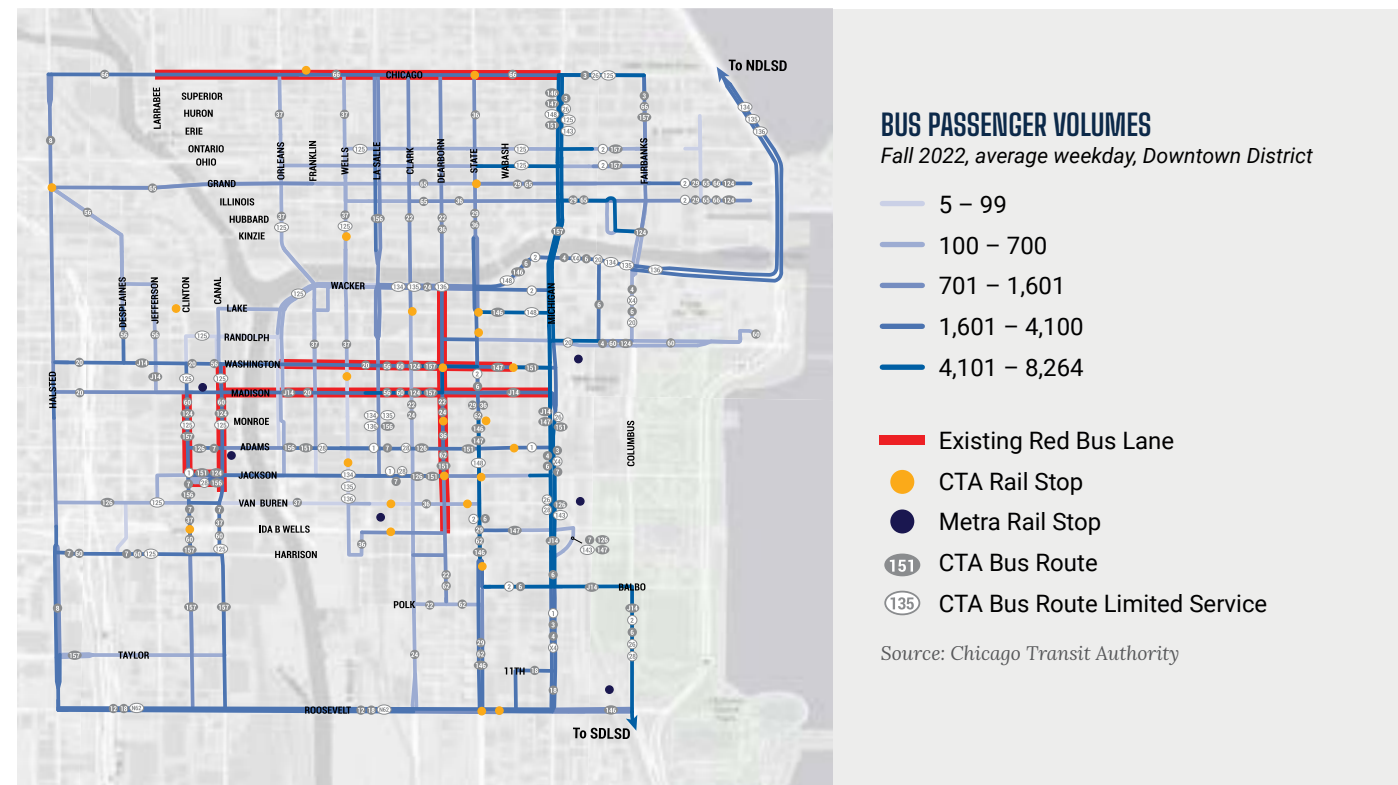




The region's bus system connects the regional spokes to the downtown hub as part of the hub-and-spoke transit system; CTA's grid serves downtown and connects neighborhoods throughout the City and many suburbs to rail. CTA also provides a number of express routes to downtown, primarily utilizing DuSable Lake Shore Drive.

During the first six months of 2023, the Central Area accounted for approximately 24% of the 3.2 million average weekly bus boardings and train entries that CTA provided systemwide.

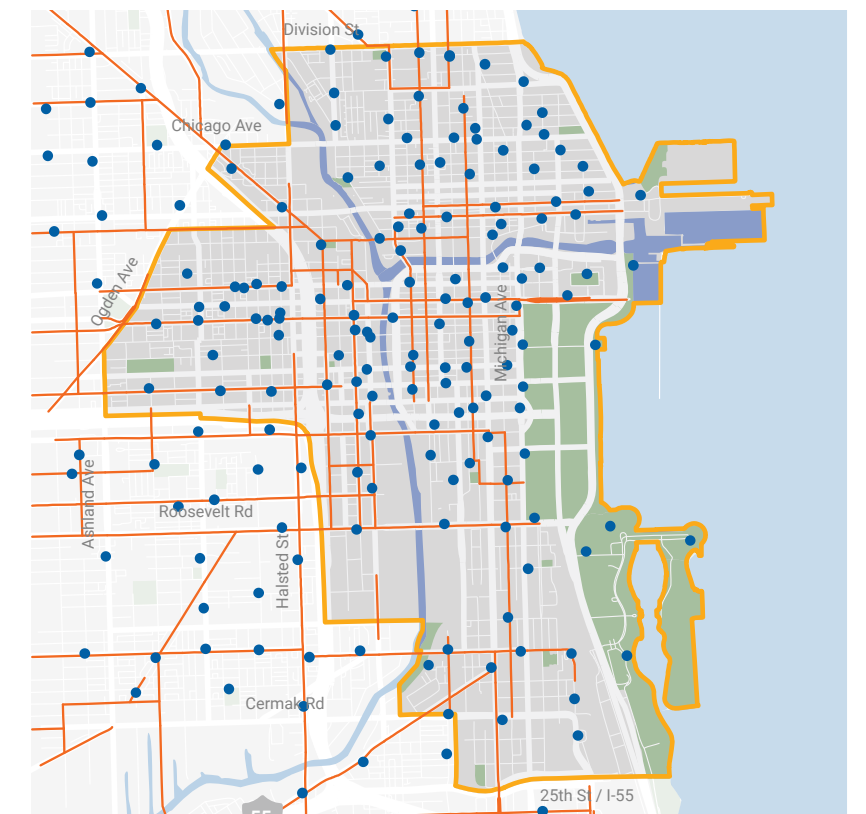
Since the 2003 Central Area Plan, downtown transit improvements have included CTA's introduction of the Pink Line route in 2006, the Green Line Morgan Street station in 2012, and the Loop Link bus service that started operating on designated traffic lanes in 2015.



## Micromobility Network

Bikeway density – the percentage of street miles with designated bike miles – is 15-20% within the Downtown District.

Furthermore, 134 Divvy bikeshare stations are located throughout downtown, and shared scooters are available through three companies. In 2022, nearly 50% of Divvy rides involved trips in the Central Area.





## Walkability

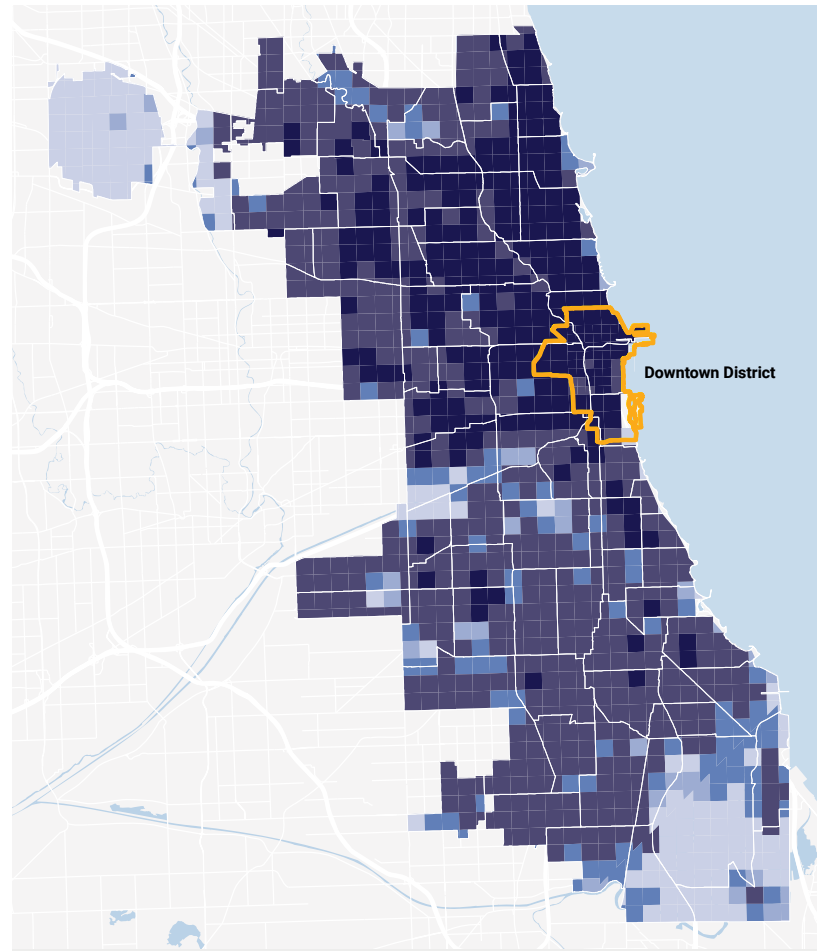
Chicago is ranked the fourth most walkable city in the country by Walk Score, an online service measuring travel time, pedestrian friendliness, density of city blocks and availability of nearby amenities.

Most of the Central Area has the highest walkability ranking of 90 or more, meaning that it is a walker's paradise where daily errands do not require a car.

## Water Taxi

Chicago water taxis operate from March through November along the Chicago River and Lake Michigan, serving both commuters and tourists.

Key stops on the water taxi routes include Metra's Union and Ogilvie stations, Chinatown on the southern end, and North Michigan Avenue and Navy Pier on the north side of the Central Area.



### WALKABILITY RATING 2018

- Very low
- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Very high

Chicago's most walkable neighborhoods are in the **Downtown and north side** neighborhoods.

Source: City of Chicago CMAP - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (2018), Esri, SB Friedman

## CHALLENGES

### Transit Worker Shortage Leading to Less Reliable Transit

Central Area transit service is experiencing the same pandemic-related service issues that are challenging cities nationwide, especially worker shortages that increase wait times for trains and buses.

CTA's Meeting the Moment Action plan includes a number of measures to address this challenge and reliability issues.



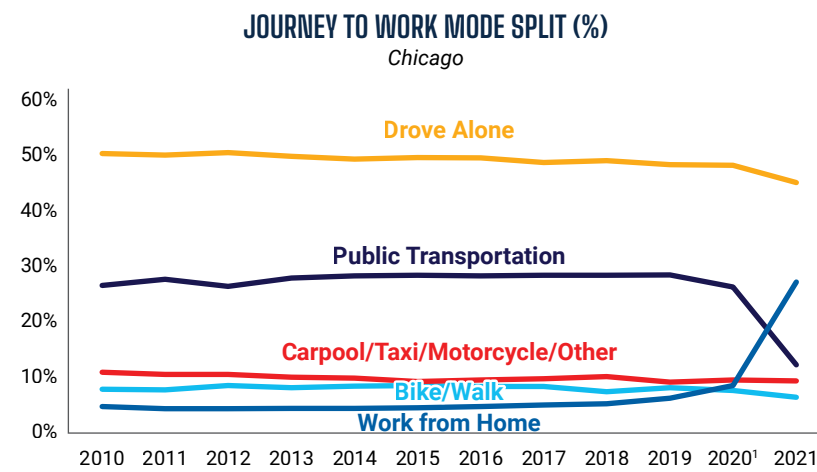




## Rise in Work from Home Leading to Decline in Transit Use

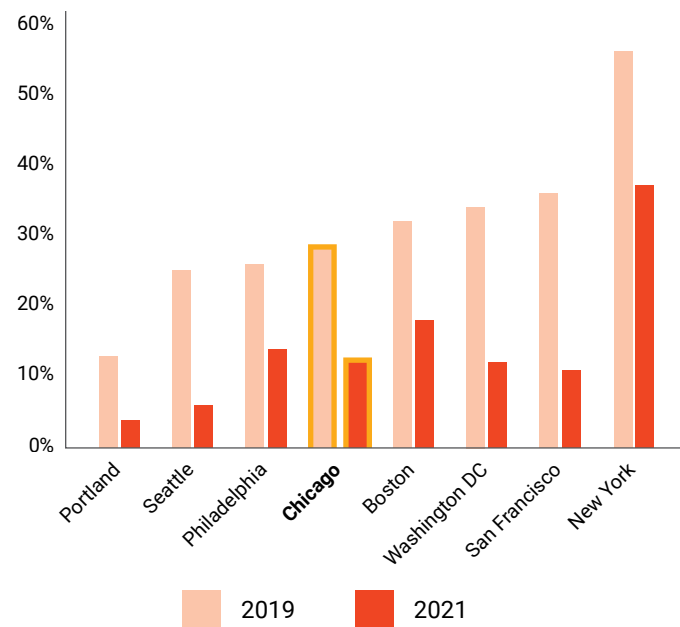
Prior to the pandemic, the share of Chicagoans driving to work declined from 50% in 2010 to about 48% in 2019, while the share riding transit, biking, walking, and working from home increased slightly.

In 2019, the 386,000 Chicago workers that used public transit to commute was the second highest number among U.S. cities. Equivalent to 28% of all workers, the share decreased to 12% in 2021. Over the same period, work from home trends increased from 6% of all workers to 27%.



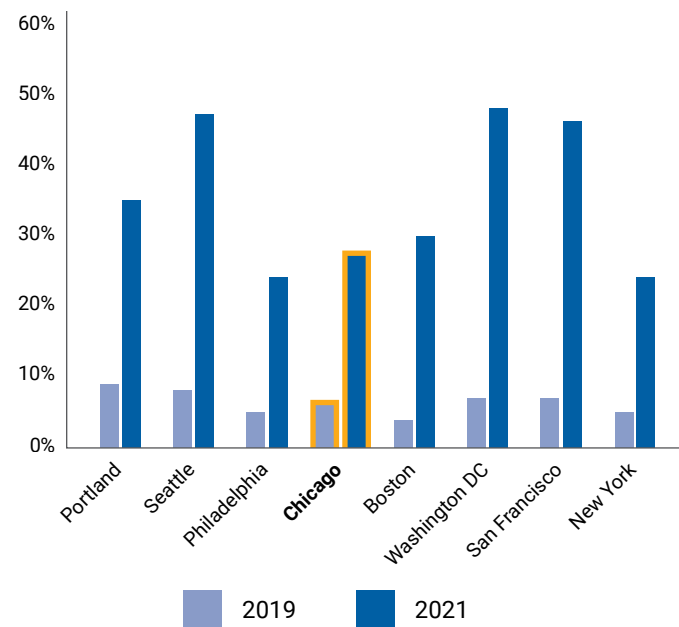
Source: ACS 1-year Estimates. SB Friedman  
 1. No 1-Year Estimate available so ACS 5-Year Estimates were used

### SHARE OF WORKERS TAKING PUBLIC TRANSIT



Source: ACS 1-year Estimates. SB Friedman

### SHARE OF WORKERS WORKING FROM HOME



Source: ACS 1-year Estimates. SB Friedman

## Transit Ridership Declines

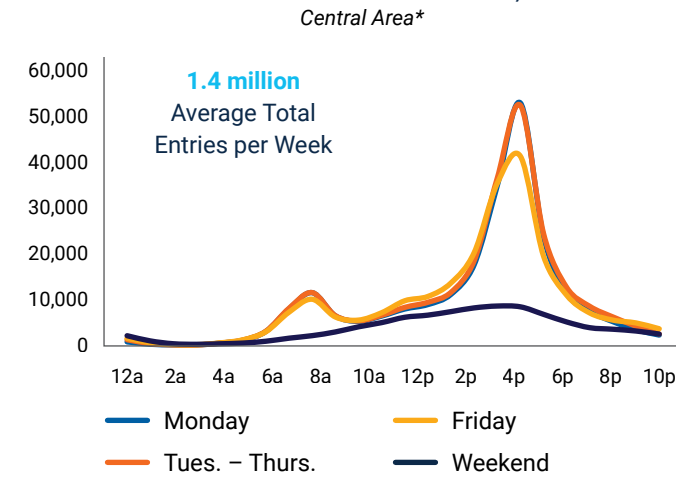
Train ridership at downtown CTA stations between 2019 and 2021 decreased from 1.4 million average weekly entries to 300,000 average weekly entries.

In 2023, ridership over the same sample months rebounded to about 700,000 weekly entries. Weekend CTA rail ridership has meanwhile rebounded to approximately 70% of pre-pandemic levels.

decreased from 800,000 average weekly boardings to 450,000 weekly boardings. In 2023, ridership over the same sample months increased to 485,000 weekly boardings. Weekend bus ridership has meanwhile rebounded to approximately 73% of pre-pandemic levels.

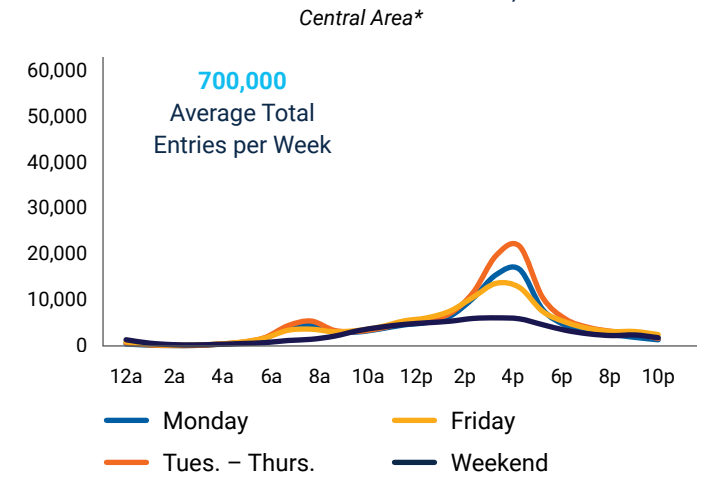
Bus ridership at downtown CTA stops between 2019 and 2021

### AVERAGE CTA RAIL ENTRIES BY HOUR, 2019



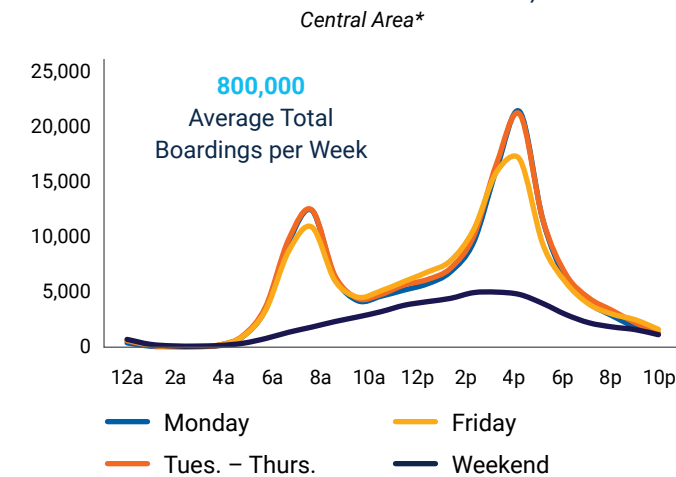
Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

### AVERAGE CTA RAIL ENTRIES BY HOUR, 2023



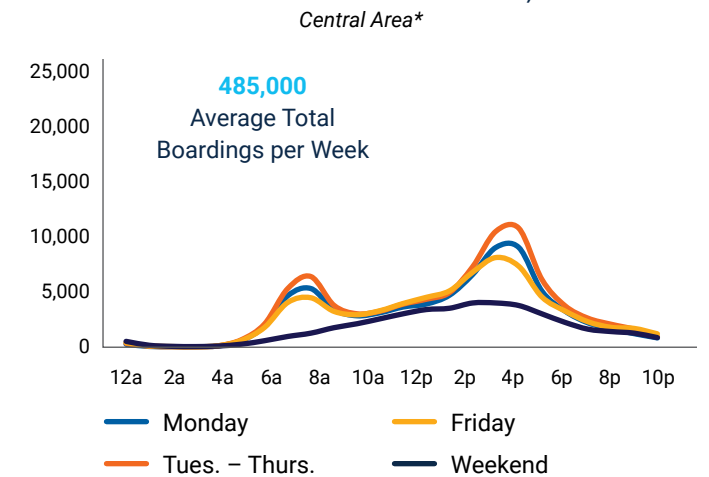
Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

### AVERAGE CTA BUS BOARDINGS BY HOUR, 2019



Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

### AVERAGE CTA BUS BOARDINGS BY HOUR, 2023



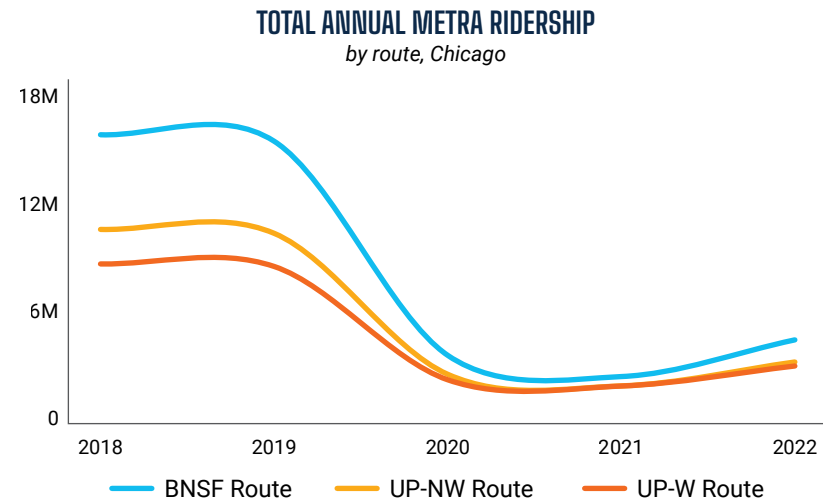
Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

\*Data represents CTA entries only at rail stations from the area bounded by of Division Street, Racine Avenue, 26th Street and Lake Michigan during March and April. Central Area riders whose trips originate in other parts of the system are not represented, such as morning commuters.





Train ridership for downtown Metra stations substantially declined across its busiest routes due to the pandemic, with some routes experiencing approximately 75% percent fewer passengers in 2020 compared to 2018. While weekday ridership continues to rebound, weekend ridership today is close to pre-pandemic levels.



Source: RTA, SB Friedman

#### CHANGE IN METRA RIDERSHIP

METRA ROUTES	2018-20	2020-22
BNSF	-77%	+23%
Union Pacific Northwest	-75%	+26%
Union Pacific North	-74%	+33%

Source: Metra

#### LEVEL OF PRE-PANDEMIC METRA RIDERSHIP<sup>1</sup>

METRA ROUTES	TUES-THURS	MON & FRI	SAT & SUN
BNSF	47%	34%	70%
Union Pacific Northwest	44%	37%	79%
Union Pacific North	53%	43%	91%

Source: Metra

1. Ridership estimates from October 2019 and October 2022

## Fiscal Crisis Facing Transit Agencies

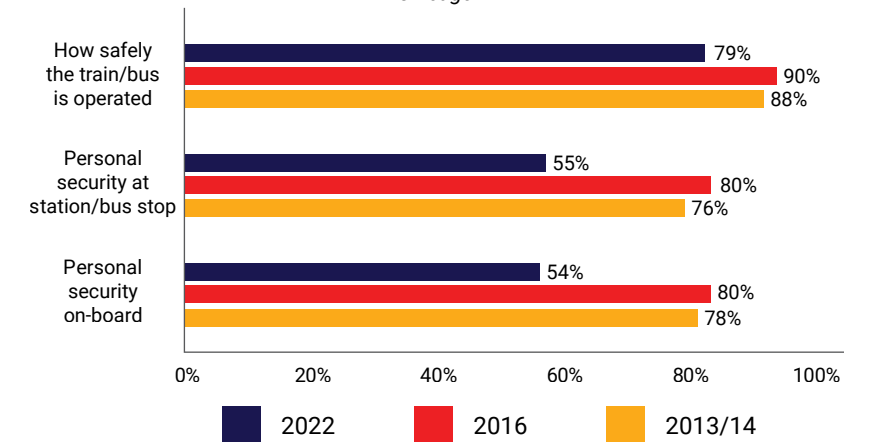
While \$3.4 billion in federal relief has been funding a portion of transit operations annually since the pandemic, area transit agencies anticipate a budget shortfall of \$730 million in 2026.



## Increased Rider Concern for Safety and Security

A 2022 Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) customer satisfaction survey found that transit riders in the Chicago region are significantly less satisfied with their safety and security than they were prior to the pandemic.

#### SATISFACTION WITH SAFETY AND SECURITY ATTRIBUTES YEAR-OVER-YEAR Chicago



Source: Regional Transportation Authority

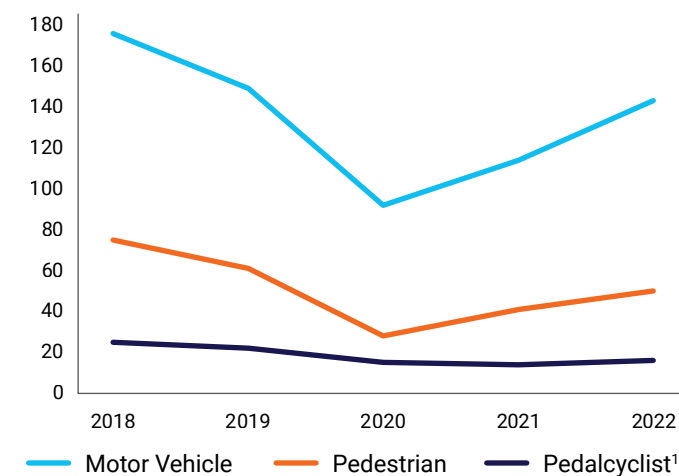
## Downtown Traffic Fatalities

Over the last five years, the Central Area has averaged eight traffic-related fatalities per year.

On average, more than half of these fatalities involve vehicle-to-vehicle crashes. Pedestrian- and cyclist-related fatalities make up the remainder, with one or two

fatalities each per year. Meanwhile, vehicular traffic volumes in August 2023 are estimated to be about 88% of pre-pandemic traffic volumes in 2019.

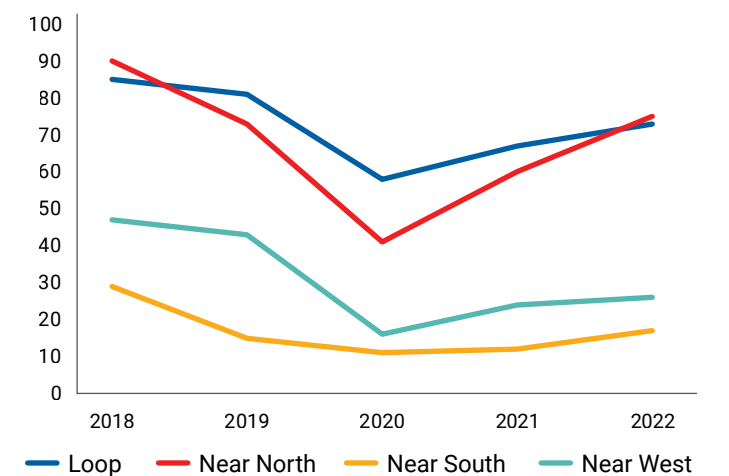
#### SERIOUS INJURY BY MODE Number of injuries per year, Downtown District



Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

1. Pedalcyclist refers to non-motorized forms of transportation, primarily bicycles

#### SERIOUS INJURIES RESULTING FROM TRAFFIC CRASHES Number of injuries per year, by Community Area<sup>1</sup>



Source: City of Chicago, SB Friedman

1. Data represents only the share of each Community Area within the Downtown District





## KEY INITIATIVES

Select key transit and infrastructure projects are highlighted below; more information is available in the Appendix.

### CTA Rail System

- **IMPROVING SYSTEM RELIABILITY.**  
CTA's Meeting the Moment Action plan is an initiative to hire more employees, deliver reliable services, enhance safety and security and improve the transit experience for riders.
- **RED AND PURPLE LINE MODERNIZATION (RPM).**  
RPM Phase One is upgrading rail infrastructure and improving accessibility for two of the major transit lines feeding downtown from the North Side.
- **RED LINE EXTENSION (RLE).**  
RLE is a plan to add five miles of track to the southern end of the Red Line, which would improve downtown access for thousands of Far South Side residents and workers.
- **STATE/LAKE CTA STATION.**  
A proposed new State/Lake CTA station will replace the more than 100-year-old existing structure with a modern, fully accessible rail hub with wider platforms and customer amenities.

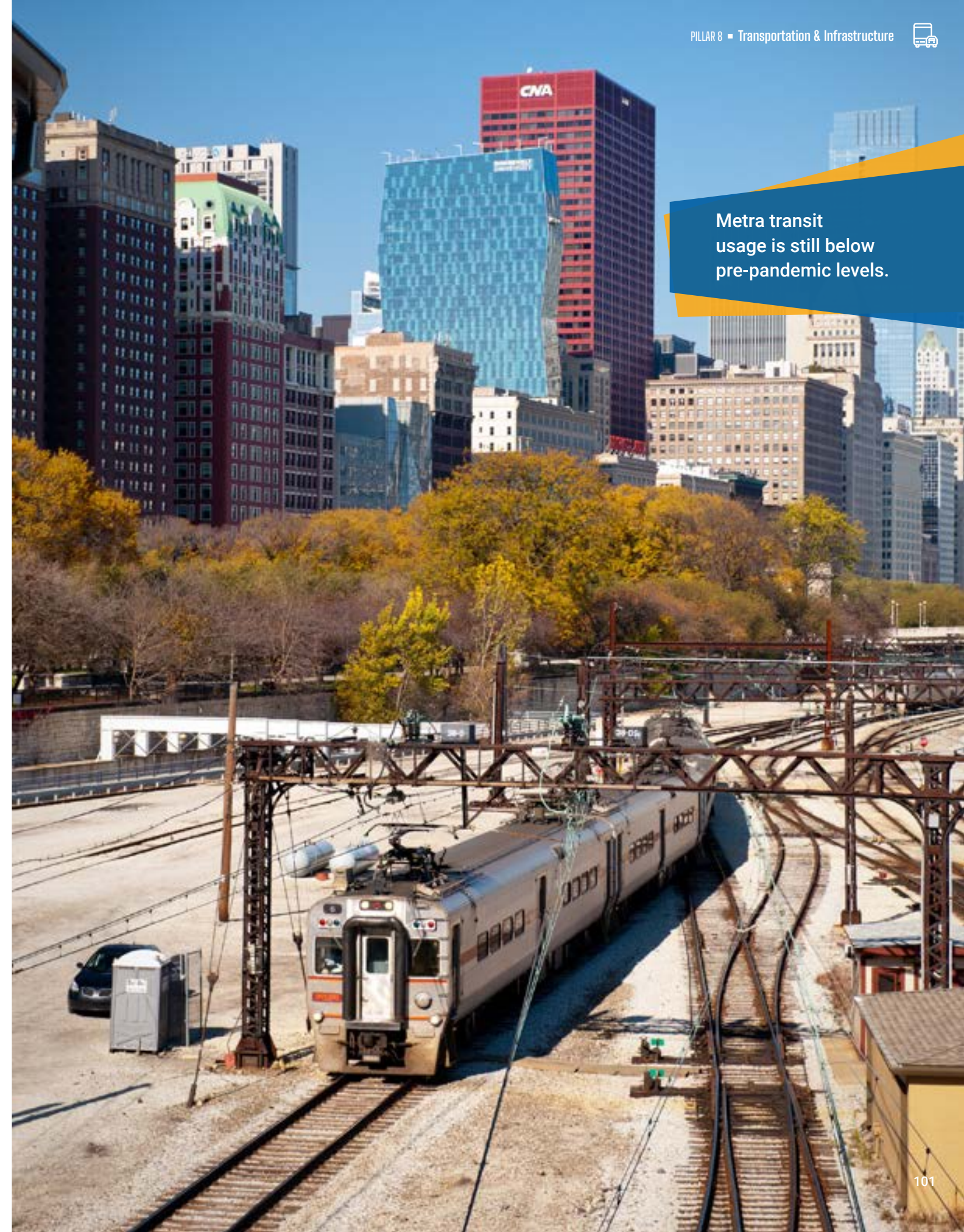


### Metra Rail System

- **GRADE SEPARATIONS.**  
Grade separations are among long-term planning proposals to reduce bottlenecks at busy rail crossings and create additional capacity at Union Station.

### Bike Network

- **BIKEWAY EXPANSION.**  
CDOT is implementing 150 miles of new bikeways to improve non-vehicular transit options along major routes that connect to the Central Area.



Metra transit usage is still below pre-pandemic levels.



## Trails

### ■ MAIN BRANCH RIVERWALK.

A pedestrian riverwalk and landscape improvements were completed in 2019, creating a continuous pedestrian riverwalk along the south side of the main branch of the Chicago River.

### ■ NAVY PIER FLYOVER.

The Navy Pier Flyover was completed in 2021, enabling Lakefront Trail users to bypass car traffic while crossing the Chicago River.



#### DOWNTOWN HIGH CRASH CORRIDORS 2022

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Michigan – Oak to Roosevelt      | 9. Washington – Wacker to Michigan     |
| 2. Orleans – Chicago to Ohio        | 10. Randolph – Clark to Michigan       |
| 3. Ontario – Orleans to Fairbanks   | 11. Dearborn – Lake to Monroe          |
| 4. Ohio – Orleans to Fairbanks      | 12. Congress – Wells to Michigan       |
| 5. LaSalle – Ontario to Wacker      | 13. Lake Shore – Division to Roosevelt |
| 6. State – Chicago to Harrison      | 14. Chicago – Ogden to State           |
| 7. Fairbanks – Huron to North Water | 15. Roosevelt – Halsted to Michigan    |
| 8. Wacker – Jackson to Columbus     |  |

Source: Vision Zero Chicago Downtown Action Plan

## Tactical Safety Improvements

- **VISION ZERO CHICAGO.** The City's Vision Zero Chicago plan aims to reduce serious traffic-related injuries and fatalities to zero by 2026, with special safety improvements planned for downtown corridors that account for a third of this city's overall crash rate.



## PILLAR 9

# Land Use

The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update







# LAND USE

Over the last two decades, downtown has evolved with multiple, high-density, mixed-use corridors that present a variety of challenges and opportunities for future growth.

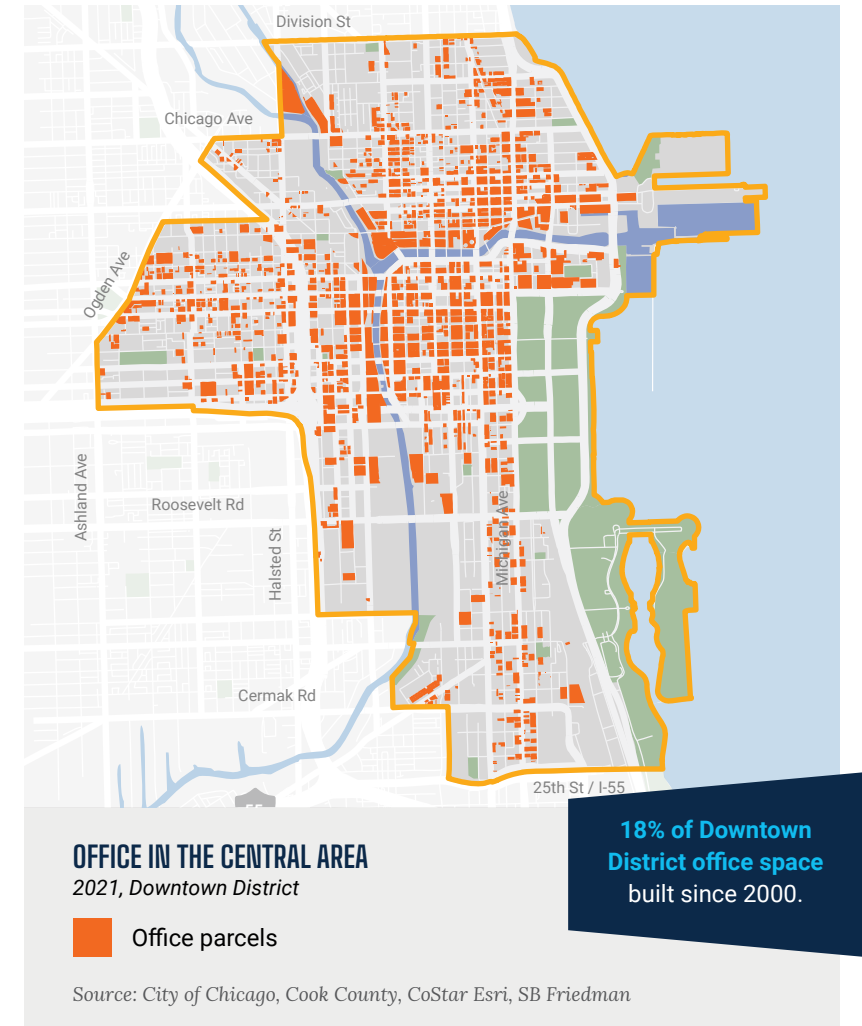
Intentional land use planning supports the continuation of a dynamic and resilient mix of uses that are conducive to a thriving live, work, play environment.



## ASSETS

### Growing Jobs Center

Since 2003, the downtown office core has expanded west and north from the Loop, creating a larger workplace geography that includes complimentary uses like restaurants, cafes and open spaces.

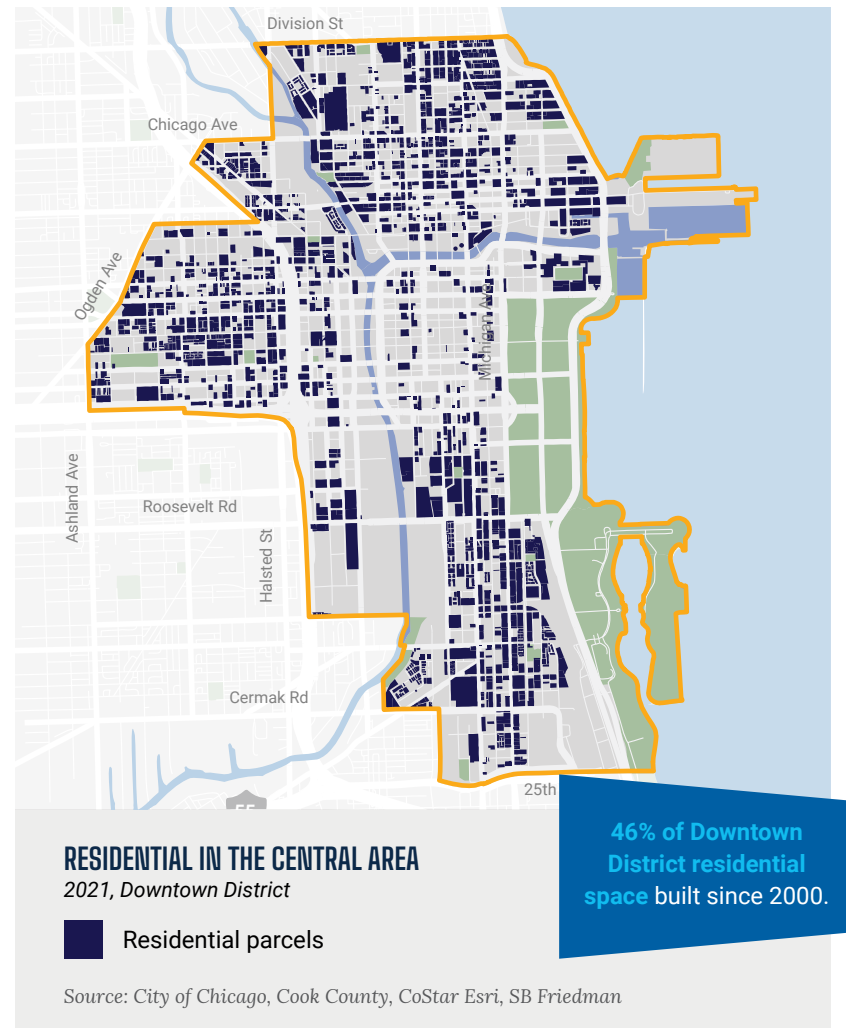
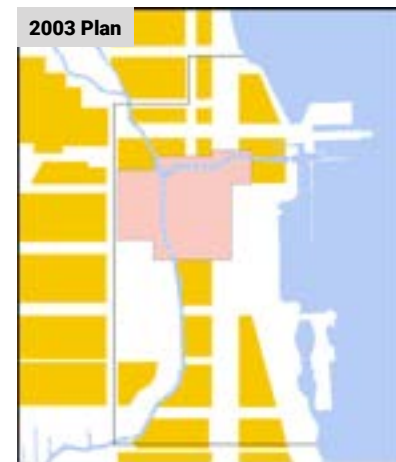




## Expanded Residential Use

Similarly, residential land uses have continued to expand into many parts of downtown.

Whereas 18% of the area's office space was built since 2000, 46% of its residential space was built during the same period.



## Unique Retail Corridors

Cultural, entertainment and tourism destinations have also expanded downtown since the 2003 Central Area Plan, especially within established retail districts that cater to visitors on foot.

To reinforce the unique scale and walkability of these areas, the City has formally designated them as Pedestrian (P) streets to discourage auto-oriented construction and investment.





## Critical Services Downtown

Many critical services are located throughout downtown, including facilities that ensure clean drinking water, provide building materials, ensure public safety, manage waste, and support building cooling systems.

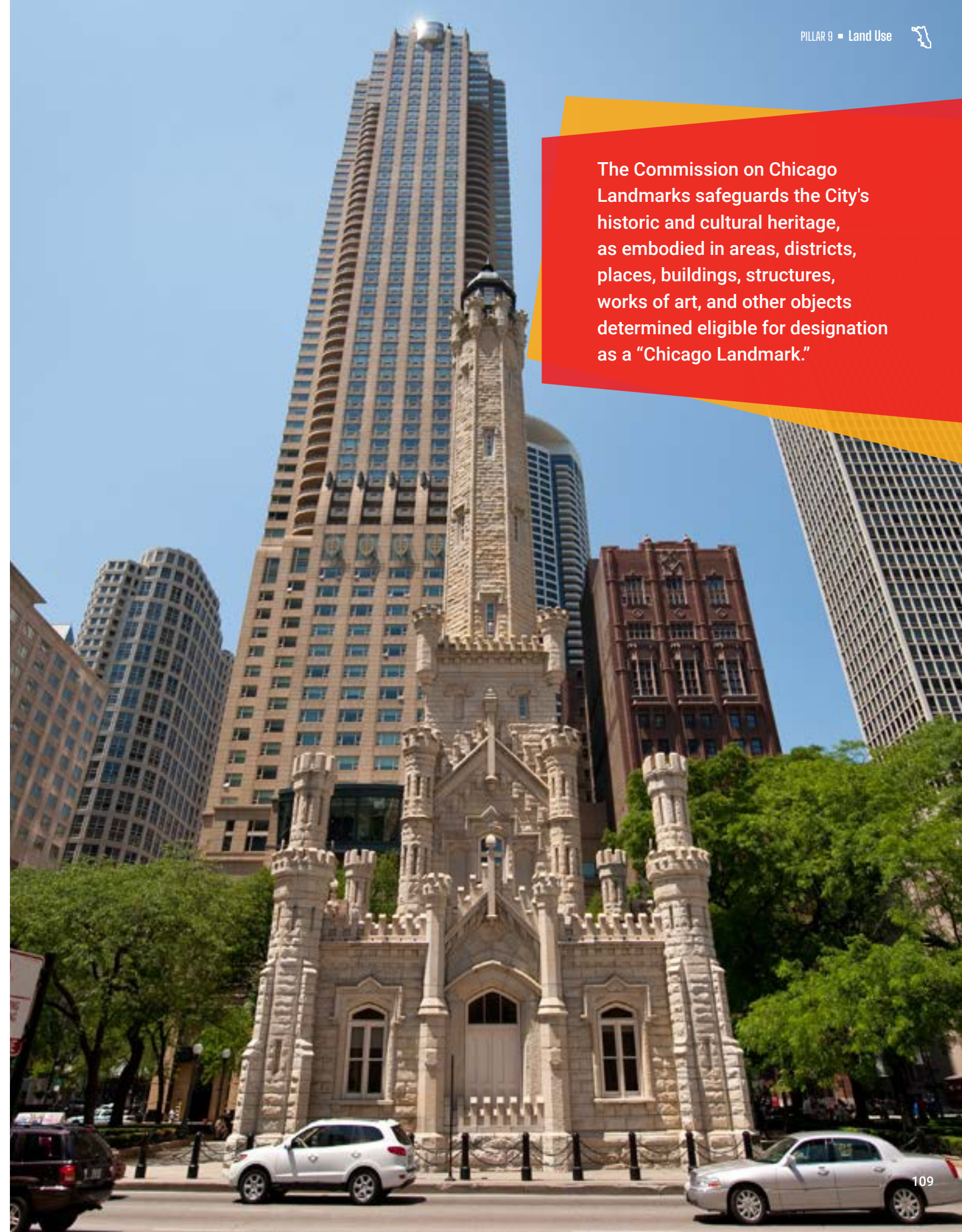
As downtown continues to evolve, special accommodations are required to ensure the facilities' continued operation on behalf of the city and region.

## Historic Preservation

The city's global legacy as multi-dimensional cultural center is reflected in the many landmark buildings and sites downtown that contribute to local heritage.

There are 17 Landmark Districts in the Central Area, ranging from the high-style residential district on Astor Street to the former meat packing district of Fulton-Randolph Market.

Additionally, there are 128 individual landmark buildings in the Central Area ranging from a Schlitz Brewery-tied house, to Art Deco skyscrapers, to government buildings, to cultural facilities.



The Commission on Chicago Landmarks safeguards the City's historic and cultural heritage, as embodied in areas, districts, places, buildings, structures, works of art, and other objects determined eligible for designation as a "Chicago Landmark."



## CHALLENGES

### Monoculture of Office Use in the Central Business District

Chicago's central business district is nearly 70% office, with ancillary uses involving housing and hospitality.

Given ongoing market shifts due to the pandemic and other global trends, the monoculture of offices along select Loop corridors risk stagnation without land use and other potential interventions by the City.

BUILDING AREA BY LAND USE IN THE LOOP  
2022

	OFFICE	RETAIL	RESIDENTIAL <sup>1</sup>	HOSPITALITY	INDUSTRIAL
<b>Square Feet</b>	114.4M	4.1M	34.5M	17.3M	0.05M
<b>Share of Space</b>	67%	2%	20%	10%	0%

Source: CoStar, SB Friedman, Chicago Loop Alliance Loop Residential Impact Study (2022)  
1. Assumes 1,000 square feet per residential for-sale unit

### Retail Imbalance

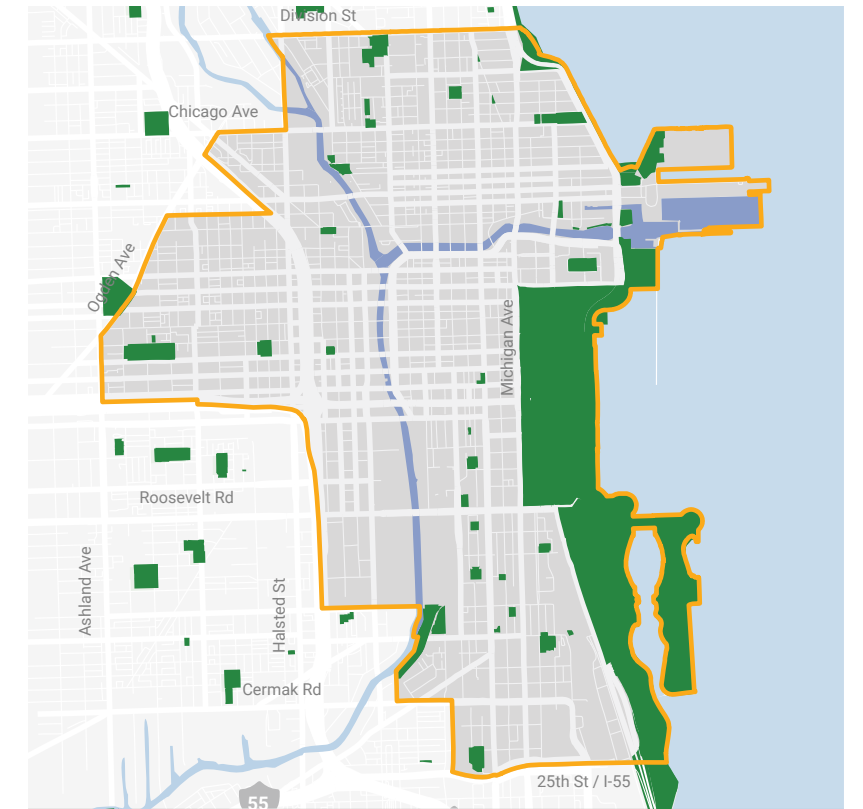
High supply and reduced demand for downtown retail space is creating challenges for property owners, reducing foot traffic and impairing the general vitality of the entire Central Area.

The post-pandemic, record-high vacancy rates have stabilized in certain sub-areas but online shopping, inflation, and other issues continue to create uncertainties about how to viably reoccupy vacant storefronts with productive uses.




### Concentration of Park Land Use along Lakefront

Nearly 84% of all Chicago Park District land within the Central Area is concentrated along the lakefront within Grant Park, Northerly Island, and portions of Burnham Park, portions of which are inaccessible due to festivals and events. Park space is limited away from the lake.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACE DOWNTOWN

2023, Downtown District

 Parks and open space

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman



## KEY INITIATIVES

### Recent Plans and Policies

In recent years, the City has adopted significant land use plans and innovative policies to encourage reinvestments in existing corridors and to promote equitable neighborhood development.

Major initiatives include the:

- **2016 AND 2017 DOWNTOWN (D) ZONING DISTRICT EXPANSIONS,** which accommodated increased demand while also enabling more construction projects to increase the permitted density for a given site by making financial contributions to the Neighborhood Opportunity Bonus system.
- **2016 NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY BONUS (NOB) SYSTEM,** which enables downtown construction projects to make voluntary payments for additional size and density. Eighty percent of the funding is made available as grants for private projects along West, Southwest and South Side commercial corridors. The remaining 20% of the bonus contributions are split between downtown infrastructure improvements and designated landmarks citywide.
- **2017 NORTH BRANCH FRAMEWORK PLAN,** which rezoned the southern portion of the North Branch Industrial Corridor to accommodate and expand the Central Area.

- **2021 FULTON MARKET INNOVATION DISTRICT UPDATE,** which permitted residential uses north of Lake Street within an area that was previously reserved for business uses.

- **2021 AFFORDABLE REQUIREMENTS ORDINANCE,** which increased the required set-aside of affordable units from 10% to 20%, among other changes.

- **URBAN LAND INSTITUTE'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS,** which engaged businesses and residents to create corridor specific goals and strategies for portions of Michigan Avenue, State Street and LaSalle Street downtown.



# Appendix

## Looking Back, Implementation Status from 2003 and 2009 Area Plan & Action Plan

The  
**CENTRAL  
AREA PLAN**  
Update





# RECENT CENTRAL AREA PLANS

## This section looks back at the implementation progress of the City of Chicago's past Central Area plans.

The 2003 Plan envisioned a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use center that provides opportunities to “work, live, play, and celebrate.” The 2003 Plan notes the need for increased residential and employment opportunities, enhanced passive and active transit opportunities and infrastructure, and connectivity to green amenities. In addition to transportation and waterfront and open spaces, a key theme was the development framework. The development framework highlighted the following, which can also be found on Page 37 of the 2003 Plan:

- **EXTEND** the highest density office core into the West Loop around transit stations, services, and the Chicago River.
- **DEVELOP** high-density, mixed-use corridors which extend from the expanded Loop and are linked to transit
- **SUPPORT** a diverse collection of livable neighborhoods and special places.
- **PRESERVE** and strengthen the Central Area's world-renowned architectural and cultural heritage.
- **STRENGTHEN** Industrial Corridors and Planned Manufacturing Districts.
- **DIRECT** the growth of the Central Area's educational institutions and provide opportunities for lifelong learning.
- **PROMOTE** and strengthen the Central Area's world-class cultural assets.



## 2003 CHICAGO CENTRAL AREA PLAN

The 2003 Plan identified project concepts and investment opportunities that would align with and bring to fruition the plan's vision.

## 2009 CENTRAL AREA ACTION PLAN

The 2009 Central Area Action Plan expanded on the 2003 Plan, providing further guidance and structure toward implementation, including a list of key transportation, urban design, waterfront, and open space projects that would help the area achieve its potential.

The projects were identified with the help of a steering committee comprised of businesses and civic leaders, as well as input from three task forces involving economic development and land use; transportation; and urban design, waterfronts and open space.










# OUTLINE

This document illustrates the 84 completed, under construction, and ongoing projects that were identified or evolved from the 2003 and 2009 plans.

Various entities including the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development (DPD), Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Park District, numerous private developers, and others implemented these projects.

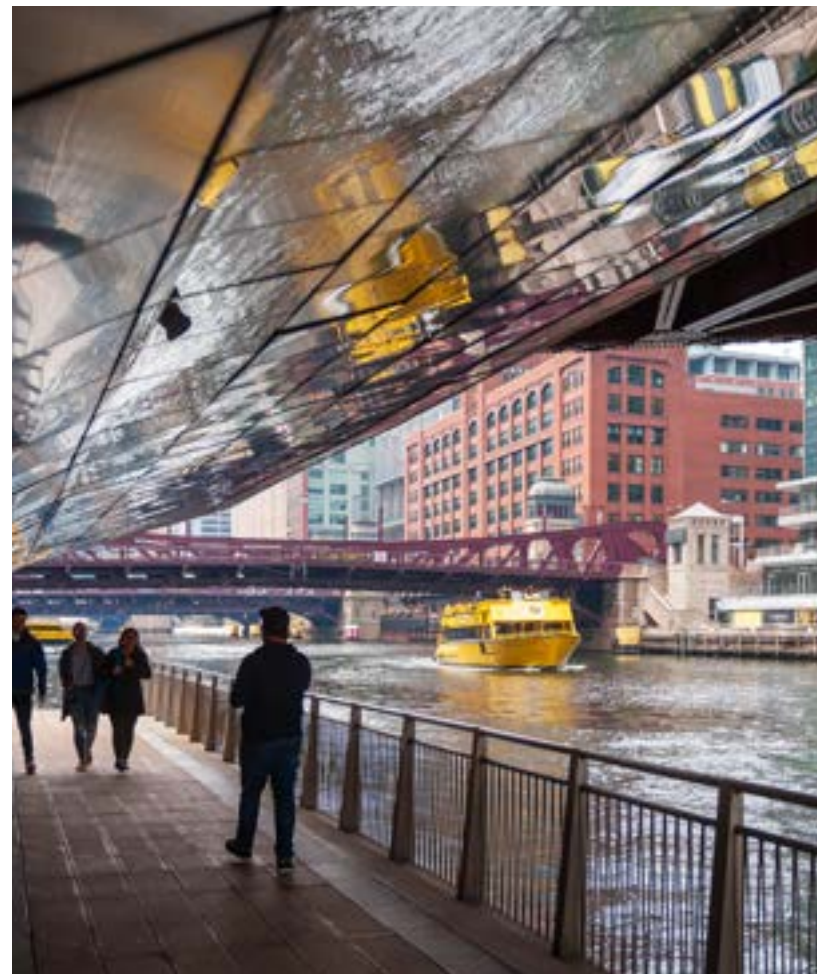
Projects are grouped into the following categories:

-  **Downtown Rail**
-  **Other Transportation**  
*(Car/trucks, pedestrian, bike, other)*
-  **Regional Rail**
-  **River Walk**
-  **Parks & Open Space**

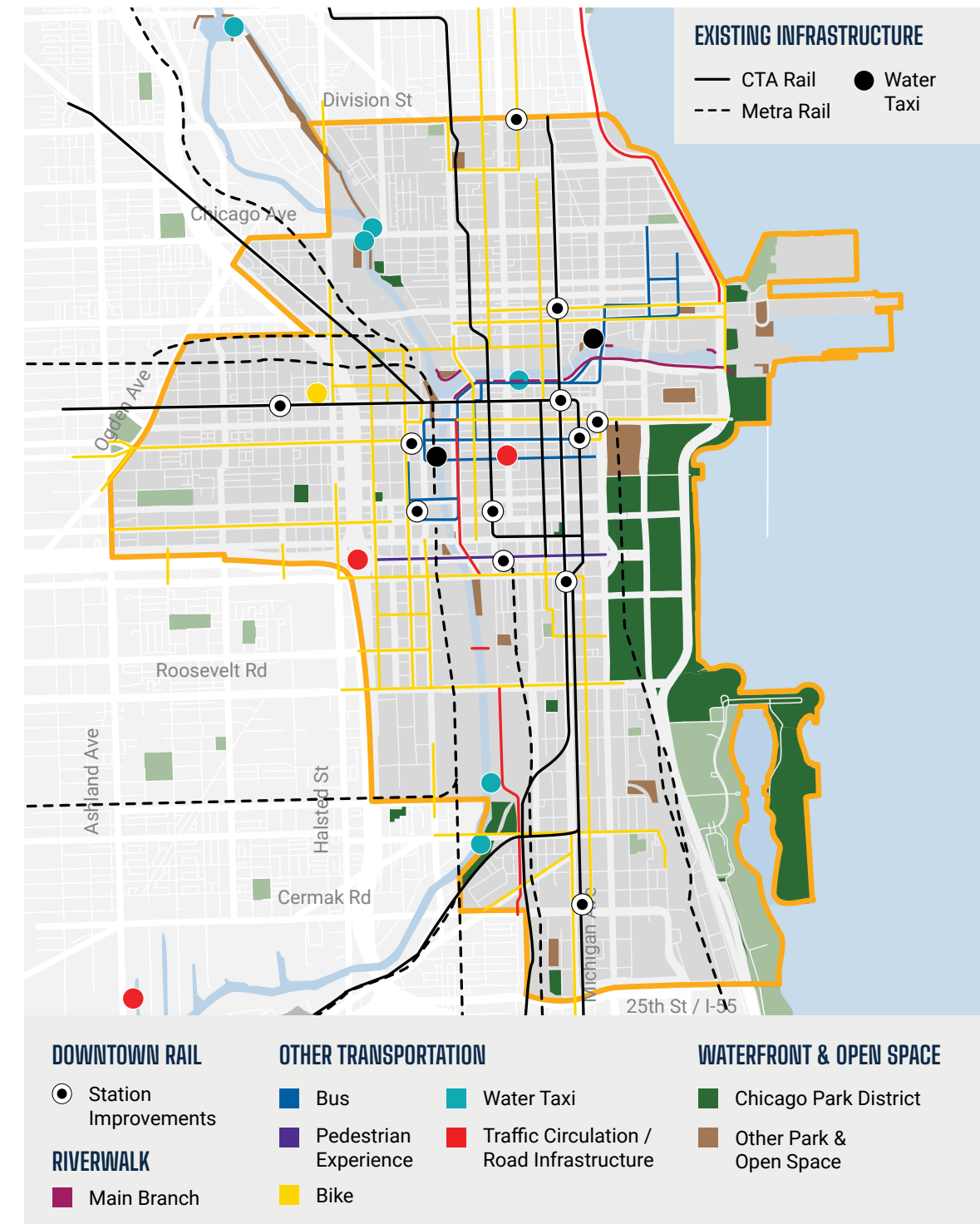
Each category includes a map of the completed, under construction, and ongoing projects, along with an accompanying table. The table provides relevant information about each project. Projects encompassing a large part of the downtown or which are not associated with a specific location are not mapped.

Planned, paused, and unfunded projects are presented in separate tables. Project phase descriptions reflect the status of the project in early 2023:

- Completed**  
*PROJECT GOAL OR OBJECTIVE WAS COMPLETED.*
- Under Construction**  
*UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT THE TIME THIS REPORT WAS PRODUCED.*
- Ongoing**  
*SOME COMPONENTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND OTHERS ARE AT VARIOUS STAGES OF COMPLETION, OR ARE MULTIPHASE PROJECTS.*
- Unfunded**  
*PROJECT HAS PROGRESSED PAST THE PLANNING PHASE, AND IS ANTICIPATED TO BREAK GROUND WHEN FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE AND DEPLOYED.*
- Planned/Planning**  
*IN THE EARLY STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT (FOR EXAMPLE, DURING THE DESIGN PHASE) OR STUDIES ARE UNDERWAY.*
- Paused**  
*NO LONGER BEING STUDIED OR PURSUED.*



# ALL COMPLETED/ONGOING/ UNDER CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS



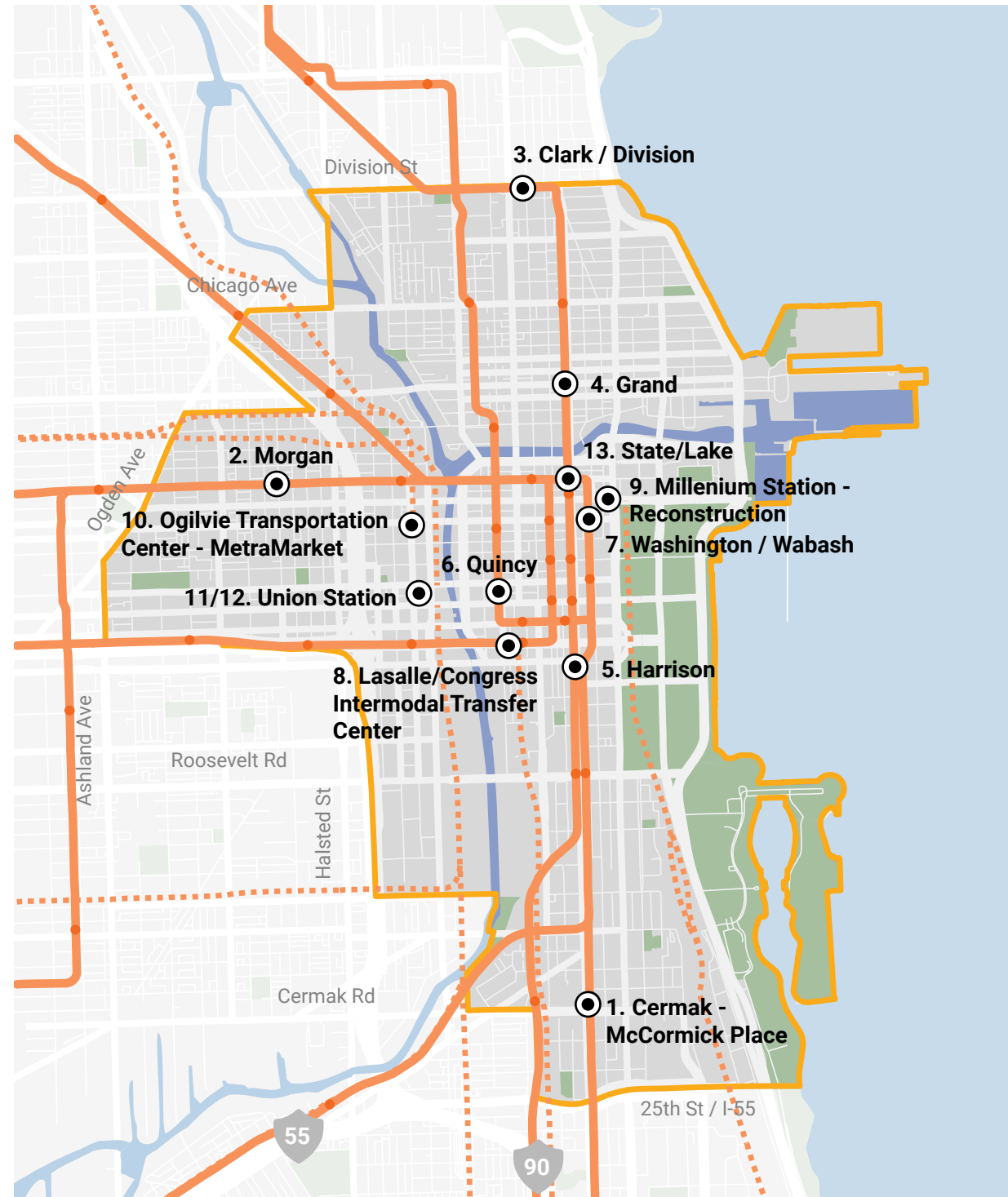
Source: CoStar, SB Friedman





## Downtown Rail

Downtown rail projects improve and increase neighborhoods access to the Central Area, connecting workers, residents and visitors to professional, cultural, and recreational opportunities.



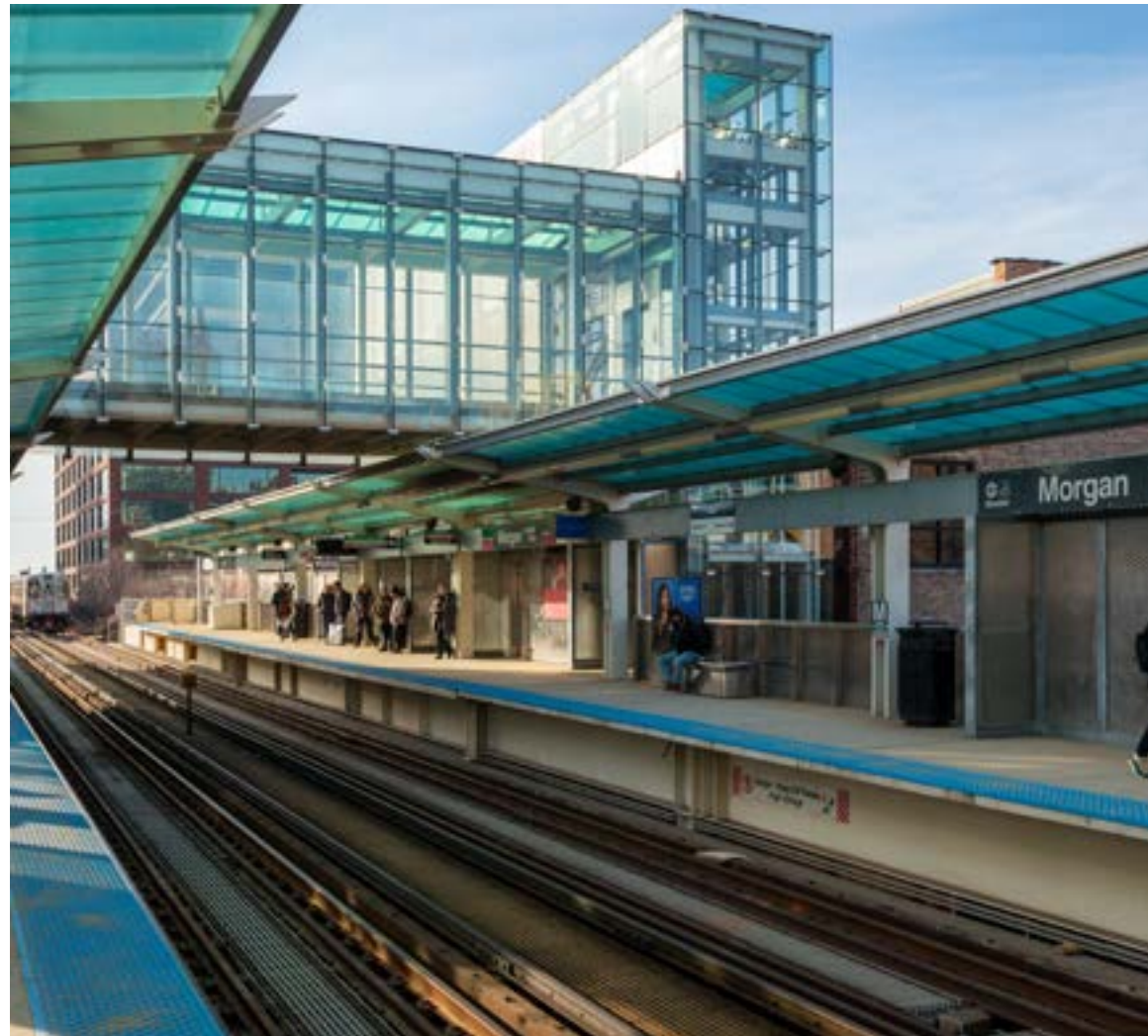
Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

## Completed, Ongoing and Under Construction Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>CTA Infill Stations</b>	Complete	
1. Cermak-McCormick Place – Green		Opened in 2015
2. Morgan – Green/Pink		Opened in 2012
<b>CTA Station Modernization</b>	Complete	
3. Clark/Division – Red		Second entrance added, modernized in 2015
4. Grand – Red		Modernized in 2012
5. Harrison – Red		Modernized in 2014
6. Quincy – Loop Elevated		Restored, modernized in 2018
7. Washington/Wabash – Loop Elevated		Reconstructed in 2017
<b>8. LaSalle/Congress Intermodal Transfer Center</b>	Complete	CDOT completed construction and CTA began service at the LaSalle/Congress Intermodal Transfer Center in June 2011 to support Metra commuters arriving at LaSalle Street Station.
<b>9. Millennium Station – Reconstruction</b>	Complete	Metra completed reconstruction of Millennium Station (formerly Randolph Street Terminal) in 2005.
<b>10. Ogilvie Transportation Center – MetraMarket</b>	Complete	The MetraMarket project was a 100,000 square foot retail and restaurant development on the ground floor of Ogilvie Transportation Center. The first phase of the development, the 10,000-square-foot Chicago French Market, opened in 2009 and continues to provide Metra commuters and nearby workers with access to fresh produce and other artisan goods.
<b>11. Union Station – Access / Intermodal Upgrades</b>	Complete	Significant upgrades to transportation features around Union Station were envisioned, including direct access points, improved pedestrian environment and wayfinding, as well as an intermodal transfer center along Jackson. CDOT completed construction and CTA began bus service at the Union Station Transit Center in 2015.
<b>12. Union Station – Capacity/Facility Upgrades</b>	Ongoing	CDOT-led master plan was finalized in 2012 and supplemented in 2015, including plans for upgraded passenger amenities. Amtrak is leading implementation of master plan projects within the station and CDOT is taking lead on transportation projects surrounding the station.
<b>CTA Station Modernization</b>	Under Construction	
<b>13. State/Lake – Loop Elevated</b>		New station design is complete. Utility relocation work began in 2022, and construction is expected to occur from 2023-2026.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman







## Unfunded, Planned and Paused Projects

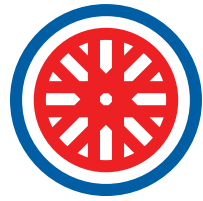
PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>CTA Station Modernization – All Stations Accessibility Project (Phase III)</b> Washington – Blue Monroe – Red Adams/Wabash – Loop Elevated	Unfunded	A 2023 CDOT application to the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program is pending. Stations are intended to be funded as part of Phase 3 of the CTA All Stations Accessibility Program.
<b>CTA Station Modernization – All Stations Accessibility Project (Phase IV)</b> Monroe – Blue LaSalle/Congress – Blue LaSalle – Loop Elevated Clinton/Congress – Blue	Unfunded	Stations are intended to be funded as part of Phase 4 of the CTA All Stations Accessibility Program.
<b>CTA Infill Stations</b> Division - Brown/Purple	Planned	CDOT will begin a feasibility study to assess the viability of a Division Street station to serve Brown and Purple Line trains, having received CTA agreement for planning and design activities in fall 2022.
<b>Van Buren Street Station – Renovations</b>	Planned	The planned renovation project is partially funded and working through the environmental review process. Metra is continuing to pursue grant funding as review and design processes are completed.
<b>Carroll Avenue Transitway</b>	Paused	Proposed as a dedicated transit link connecting the West Loop and Streeterville, the transitway determined by CDOT’s 2018 River North-Streeterville Transit study to be significantly more complex and of uncertain value compared with on-street improvements to existing bus corridors. Potential future study is expected to involve how Grand, Illinois or other downtown corridors can more effectively provide bus service.
<b>Clinton Subway</b>	Paused	Envisioned as a new subway in the West Loop’s Clinton-Canal corridor that connects the Cermak/Chinatown and North/Clybourn CTA stations. No planning is occurring at this time. (See West Loop Transportation Center.)
<b>CTA Circle Line</b>	Paused	As envisioned in the late 2000s, the CTA Circle Line project would provide new rail service just outside the perimeter of the Central Area. The proposal is not advancing at this time.

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>CTA Infill Station</b> 18th - Green Clark/18th– Orange	Paused	One of two potential station locations proposed for Chinatown was ultimately shifted from 18th Street and constructed instead on Cermak Road. A Red Line in-fill station is planned at 15th and Clark, pending funding availability.
<b>Lakefront Transitway</b>	Paused	Proposed link to the existing high-density transit service connecting the Near South Side to Streeterville through Grant Park, concept plans were included in CDOT’s 2020 South Lakefront-Museum Campus Access Improvement Study. No further planning/design has been initiated since completion of this study.
<b>West Loop Transportation Center</b>	Paused	Proposed as a transportation hub that provides bus service, commuter rail and regional rail service on separate levels below Clinton and Canal streets, the multi-modal goals of the complex have been partly achieved by the 2015 CDOT-CTA Loop Link project and the 2012 Union Station Master Plan’s utilization of antiquated space previously used for mail handling.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman







## Other Transportation

These projects promote active travel modes like biking and walking and passive modes such as bus rapid transit (BRT), water taxis, and car-supportive infrastructure.



Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

## Completed, Ongoing and Under Construction Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>1. Bike Park by WeWork</b>	Complete	Intended to provide parking and locker room facilities for West Loop bicycle commuters, a bike facility was incorporated into the WeWork shared workplace location in Fulton Market in 2015.
<b>2. Jane Byrne Interchange</b>	Complete	Initiated in 2013 and largely completed in 2022, the \$806.4M Jane Byrne Interchange project reconstructed and rehabilitated 19 bridges and 21 ramps to improve safety, efficiency, and mobility access across multiple modes of transportation.
<b>3. Loop Link</b> • Clinton Street Transitway • East-West Transitway (Monroe)	Complete	Completed in 2015, the Loop Link included modern transit upgrades such as dedicated bus lanes for bus rapid transit (BRT) vehicles, protected bike lanes, raised platform bus shelters, and related pedestrian enhancements.  Intended to link the proposed Carroll Avenue Transitway and proposed West Loop Transportation Center via rail, transitway planning evolved into the Loop Link's Clinton-Canal segment.  Conceived as a below-grade transit corridor under Monroe Street, transitway planning evolved into the Loop Link's Madison-Washington segment.
<b>4. Lower Wacker Express Buses</b>	Complete	Express bus service was reintroduced to Lower Wacker Drive following Wacker Drive reconstruction, including bus priority measures at key intersections and on-ramps.
<b>5. Navy Pier Flyover</b>	Complete	Conceived as one of two bridges to facilitate pedestrian movement across the Main and South branches of the Chicago River, the flyover was completed in 2021 as an intersection-free component of the mixed-use Lakefront Trail.
<b>6. Streetscape/Corridor Improvements- Congress Parkway</b>	Complete	One of multiple streetscaping projects along key east-west arterials downtown, parkway improvements were completed in 2013 between Michigan and Wells.
<b>7. Traffic Management Center</b>	Complete	Originally planned for the Near West Side to monitor and control hundreds of traffic signals throughout the Central Area, Traffic Management Centers were ultimately completed at 2 N. LaSalle and 2451 S. Ashland.
<b>8. Wacker Drive – Reconstruction</b>	Complete	Comprehensive upgrades to the north-south portion of Wacker Drive were completed in 2012.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman



PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>Lighting Enhancements*</b>	Complete	Lighting improvements along DuSable Lake Shore Drive were completed in 2007, along Randolph Street in 2010, and along portions of South Michigan Avenue in 2008.
<b>Transit Passenger Information System* (Phase I &amp; II)</b>	Complete	Designed to create consistent signage and dynamic passenger information across all modes of public transportation, bus and train arrival times were added incrementally between 2006 and 2011 on screens at train stations, bus stops and through mobile devices. Additional improvements were added at select Metra stations in 2012 and 2016. RTA interagency signs were added at all downtown Metra terminals in 2021.
<b>9. Expand Bicycle Lanes</b>	Ongoing	Envisioned as a comprehensive system of bike lanes and signals, the work started with a two-way bike lane along Dearborn in 2013 and continues annually. Today, approximately 31 miles of bike lanes are located downtown. CDOT's Vision Zero Downtown Action Plan (2021) calls for the continued expansion of a protected bike lane network to improve mobility and safety.
<b>10. Expand Water Taxi Service</b>	Ongoing	Water taxi stops at Goose Island, Chinatown, the Riverwalk, and Chicago Avenue have been added since 2003. Additional water taxi stops are approved but yet be constructed at upcoming developments, including The 78 and the planned Bally's Chicago casino.
<b>11. North DuSable Lake Shore Drive – Improvements</b>	Ongoing	CDOT's Phase 1 design and NEPA review for the complete reconstruction of northbound lanes between Grand and Hollywood is expected to conclude in 2024, with construction to follow until 2030.
<b>12. Taylor Street Bridge</b>	Ongoing	Planned to span the South Branch at Taylor Street, the vehicular bridge's preliminary design and NEPA processes are underway. CDOT expects Phase 1 completion in 2024, with construction to conclude in 2028.
<b>13. Wells-Wentworth Connector</b>	Ongoing	Long planned as a new vehicular connection between the Near South Side and the Loop, the 1700 to 2200 blocks of South Wentworth were completed in 2019. The 1200 to 1700 blocks are under construction and expected to be completed by early 2024.
<b>Expand the Grid System*</b>	Ongoing	New and improved streets are planned, especially as former railroad property is repurposed for mixed uses, including extensions for portions of LaSalle, 13th and 15th streets within The 78. (See Wells-Wentworth Connector.)

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>Pedway Expansion*</b>	Ongoing	Efforts to improve the city's below-grade pedway continues with the 2020-2026 CDOT effort to improve programming and wayfinding, especially along the "main stem" between the Millennium Park Metra Station and the Clark/Lake CTA station. Cook County continues to lead planning for potential pedway improvements below properties adjacent to Daley Plaza.
<b>Sidewalk Enhancements*</b>	Ongoing	New sidewalks adjacent to new developments were envisioned to provide adequate space for peak flows, provide stronger landscaping, and reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles caused by curb cuts. Various CDOT Streetscaping and/or Planned Development site plans continue to address these goals.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

\*project is not included on the map.









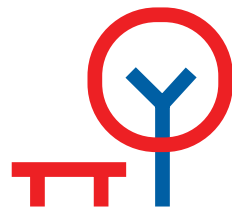


## Unfunded, Planned and Paused Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>West Loop and Streeterville Signal Interconnects</b>	Planned	Intended to coordinate traffic control devices at intersections north and west of the Loop, design work for CDOT's Interconnect Plan is expected to start in the West Loop in 2023. The Streeterville Signal Interconnect was dropped due to soil contamination concerns.
<b>Eisenhower Expressway Parkland</b>	Paused	Envisioned as a potential greenspace cap above the Eisenhower Expressway that connects the Near West Side and the University of Illinois at Chicago, the proposal is not being pursued at present.
<b>New Ogden Avenue Transit Corridor Streetcar Line</b>	Paused	Conceived as a modern streetcar connection between Navy Pier and the Illinois Medical District along a portion of Ogden Avenue, the proposal is not being advanced by the CTA at this time.
<b>Streetscape Improvements</b>	Planned	Ogden corridor streetscape improvements are advancing through the preliminary engineering and environmental review stage.
<b>Railscape Improvements</b>	Paused	Proposed beautification project would screen portions of the Metra rail line in Grant Park south to Museum Place using new parks and landscaping.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central Station Area</li> <li>Grant Park Central</li> <li>ONE Central</li> </ol>	Paused	1. Not advancing at this time.
	Paused	2. Not advancing at this time.
	Planned	3. Private, mixed-use complex would utilize approximately 32 acres of rail yards to create a multi-modal transit center that includes multiple other uses.
<b>South Branch Bridge (16th or Polk)</b>	Paused	Proposed as a pedestrian crossing for one of two potential locations along the South Branch, the project is not currently active. (See Taylor Street Bridge)
<b>Streetscape/Corridor Improvements</b>	Paused	Upgrades to on-street pedestrian environments along these corridors are not being pursued at this time.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>East Randolph</li> <li>Grand &amp; Illinois (from Michigan Avenue to DuSable Lake Shore Drive)</li> <li>West Loop/Union Station Area</li> </ul>		

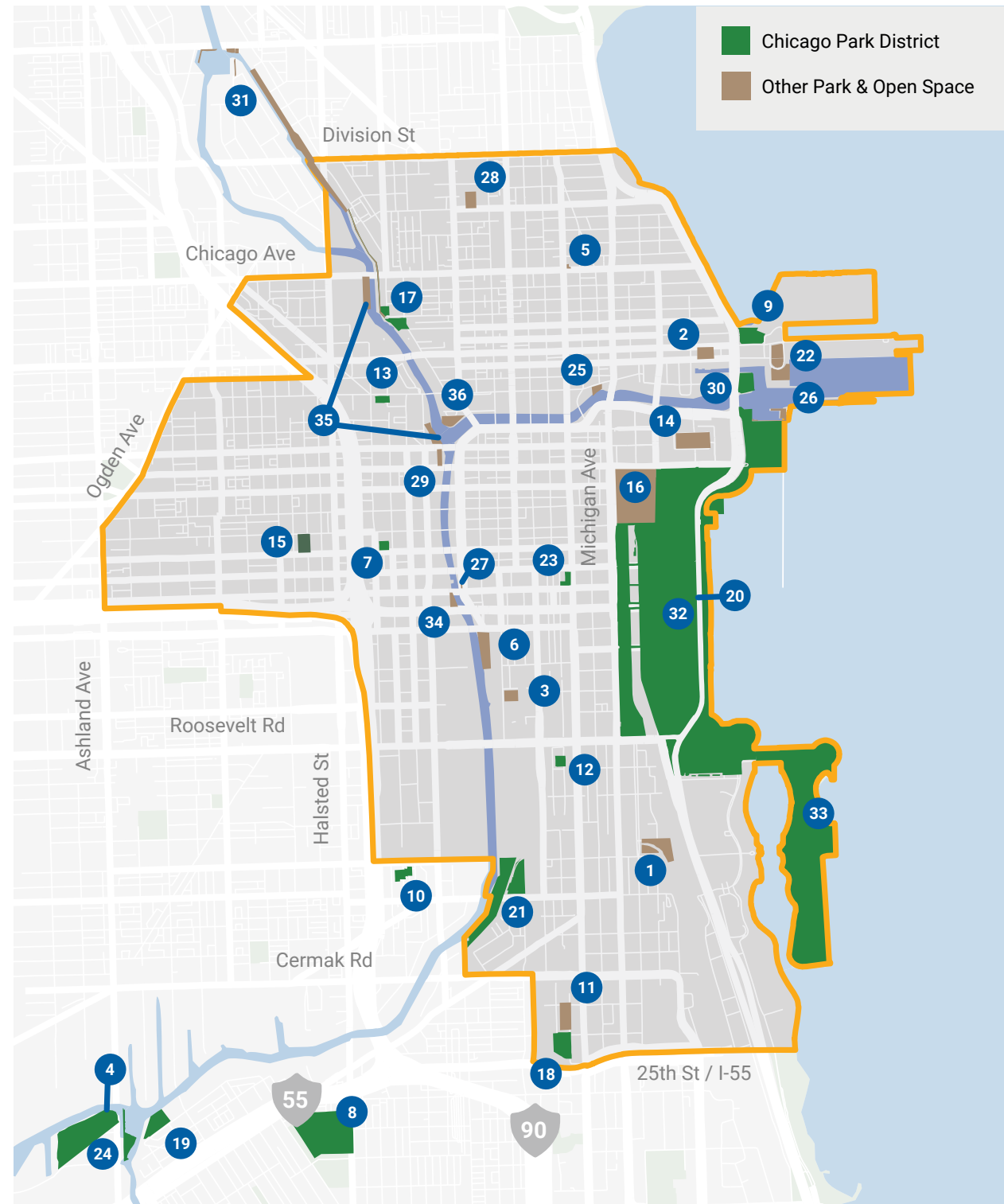
Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman





## Parks & Open Space

Parks, plazas, and other waterfront amenities and improvements were made possible through direct public investment as well as private investment.



## Completed, Ongoing and Under Construction Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
1. 15th/16th & Indiana Parks	Complete	New park spaces were developed as part of Planned Developments #499 (Central Station) and #821.
2. Bennett Park	Complete	Park construction was completed in 2019 with the residential redevelopment of the former Kraft Building as Planned Development #368 (One Bennett Park)
3. British International School of Chicago – South Loop Athletic Field	Complete	School and athletic field were constructed in 2016 within Planned Development #523 (Roosevelt Collection).
4. Canalport Riverwalk	Complete	Riverwalk was completed in 2008 among other adjacent park and riverfront investments.
5. Chicago & State Plaza	Complete	Construction was completed on northeast corner; provides outdoor seating for nearby restaurants.
6. Franklin Point	Complete	New park space includes riverwalk and wetlands within Planned Development #1298.
7. Heritage Green Park	Complete	Construction was largely completed in 2006; northeast corner of Adams and DesPlaines.
8. Henry Palmisano Park	Complete	Construction was completed within the former Stearn's Quarry.
9. Jardine Water Filtration Plant/ Addams Memorial Park	Complete	Addams Memorial Park was improved in 2018 as part of Navy Pier Flyover planning.
10. Jefferson Playlot	Complete	Playlot was expanded into a park and community garden in 2010 through a partial street vacation; 1600 block of South Jefferson Street.
11. Jones High School	Complete	Campus park created in 2015 on 2300 and 2400 blocks of South Dearborn serves nearby high school and area residents.
12. Jones Park	Complete	Improved in 2005 with new playground surfacing, fencing, and landscaping.
13. Kinzie Park	Complete	Construction was completed in 2008; southeast corner of Kinzie and Des Plaines within Planned Development #819 (K2).
14. Lakeshore East Park	Complete	Park No. 546 was completed in 2005 within Planned Development #70 (Lakeshore East)
15. Mary Bartelme Park	Complete	Construction was completed in 2010; northeast corner of Adams and Sangamon.
16. Millennium Park	Complete	Construction was largely completed in 2004 above former railyards on southeast corner of Randolph and Michigan.
17. Montgomery Ward Riverwalk & Park	Complete	Construction was largely completed in 2004 within Planned Development #447.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman





PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>18. Park No. 540</b>	Complete	Initial construction was completed in 2009; 2400 block of South Dearborn.
<b>19. Park No. 571 &amp; Eleanor St. Boathouse</b>	Complete	Construction was largely completed in 2017; 2400 block of South Eleanor within Planned Development #1190.
<b>20. Queen's Landing</b>	Complete	Improvements facilitated pedestrian travel between Grant Park and the Lakefront Trail.
<b>21. Ping Tom Park</b>	Complete	Riverside park expansion was completed north of 18th Street in 2013 with new boathouse and fieldhouse.
<b>22. Polk Bros Park at Navy Pier</b>	Complete	Significant landscape enhancements were largely completed in 2007; 1000 block of East Ohio within Planned Development #527 (Navy Pier)
<b>23. Pritzker Park</b>	Complete	Reconfiguration in 2008 created new pedestrian-oriented amenities; northwest corner of State and Van Buren.
<b>24. Canal Origins Park</b>	Complete	Construction was largely completed in 2004; 2700 block of South Ashland.
<b>25. Trump Tower</b>	Complete	Created a new public space within Planned Development #835.
<b>26. U.S. Coast Guard Station / Wacker Pier</b>	Complete	Complex renovated to support public safety on Lake Michigan and the Chicago River.
<b>27. Wacker Drive Plaza</b>	Complete	Created a new plaza at 310 S. Wacker
<b>28. Walter Payton Campus Park</b>	Complete	Athletic field was completed within Planned Development #670. (Walter Payton High School Prep)
<b>29. West Bank Plaza</b>	Complete	Created a riverfront plaza between Randolph and Lake streets within Planned Development #1226.
<b>30. DuSable Park</b>	Ongoing	Planned for the eastern end of the isthmus between Ogden Slip and Main Branch, park design was completed by the Chicago Park District with work anticipated to start by early 2024. Environmental remediation was completed in 2012.
<b>31. Goose Island Enhancements / North Ave. Turning Basin / North Branch Canal</b>	Ongoing	Efforts to create a "wild mile" floating eco-park along the eastern edge of Goose Island continues to progress, with approximately .2 miles of improvements in phase one completed in 2022.
<b>32. Grant Park Master Plan</b>	Ongoing	Completed master plan projects include Maggie Daley Park, the removal of barriers that impeded park access, and improvements to various active and passive recreational spaces.
<b>33. Northerly Island – Improvements</b>	Ongoing	Ongoing improvements include new native landscaping as well as a pond added in 2015; efforts to create an outdoor museum are progressing according to a 2022 Museum Campus Plan.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman



PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>34. Old Post Office</b>	Ongoing	Initial riverfront open spaces were completed in 2020 as part of the former mail facility's transition to mixed uses.
<b>35. West Bank Parks</b>	Ongoing	A new riverfront open space was completed at 444 W. Lake within PD#1115, with additional public open space planned for 777 W. Chicago within Planned Development #1425 (Bally's Casino)
<b>Chicago River Management Entity*</b>	Ongoing	In 2019, the River Ecology and Governance Task Force was established by executive order and continues to meet regularly to review and provide feedback on proposed riverfront work.
<b>Green Gateways*</b>	Ongoing	Greenspace expansion efforts are moving forward at the intersections of the Ohio Street feeder ramp and the Kennedy Expressway, the Dan Ryan and Eisenhower expressways, and the Dan Ryan and Stevenson expressways.
<b>Green Streets*</b>	Ongoing	Landscape improvements completed to date include locations near Chicago and Larrabee, Roosevelt and Clark, and Cermak and the Chicago River.
<b>Hubbard Street Tunnel Parks*</b>	Ongoing	Various open spaces have been included in private redevelopment plans.
<b>Near Northwest Neighborhood Parks</b>	Ongoing	Various open spaces have been included in private redevelopment plans.
<b>36. Wolf Point</b>	Under Construction	New riverfront open spaces are included within Planned Development #98 (Wolf Point)

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

\*project is not included on the map.



### Unfunded, Planned and Paused Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>Southwest Riverfront Park</b>	Planned	Planning is ongoing to extend the southwest end of the riverfront park system into downtown to ultimately connect to portions of the Riverwalk.
<b>Gateway Harbor</b>	Paused	Conceived as a new boat marina and amenities connecting Dime Pier and Navy Pier, no planning efforts are underway at this time.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman







# River Walk

Riverwalk investments provide quality-of-life improvements for area workers, residents and visitors.



Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman, SOM



## Completed, Ongoing and Under Construction Projects

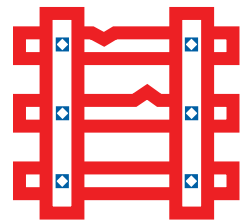
PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>Main Branch Riverwalk – South</b>	Complete	South bank between Lake Street and Lake Michigan was completed in 2019.
<b>Main Branch Riverwalk – North*</b>	Ongoing	North bank improvements included new public spaces near the Apple Store and Wolf Point. Work is pending at 400 N. Lake Shore Drive.
<b>North Branch Riverfront*</b>	Ongoing	Phase 1 of the Wild Mile was completed in 2022, which included floating walkways and gardens along the North Branch Canal. An additional 2.5 miles of floating walkways and gardens are expected to be completed in 2024.
<b>South Branch Riverfront*</b>	Ongoing	A South Branch Riverwalk Implementation Plan between Lake Street and Ping Tom Park was completed by CDOT in July 2019. Preliminary engineering and regulatory approval processes are underway.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

\*project is not included on the map.

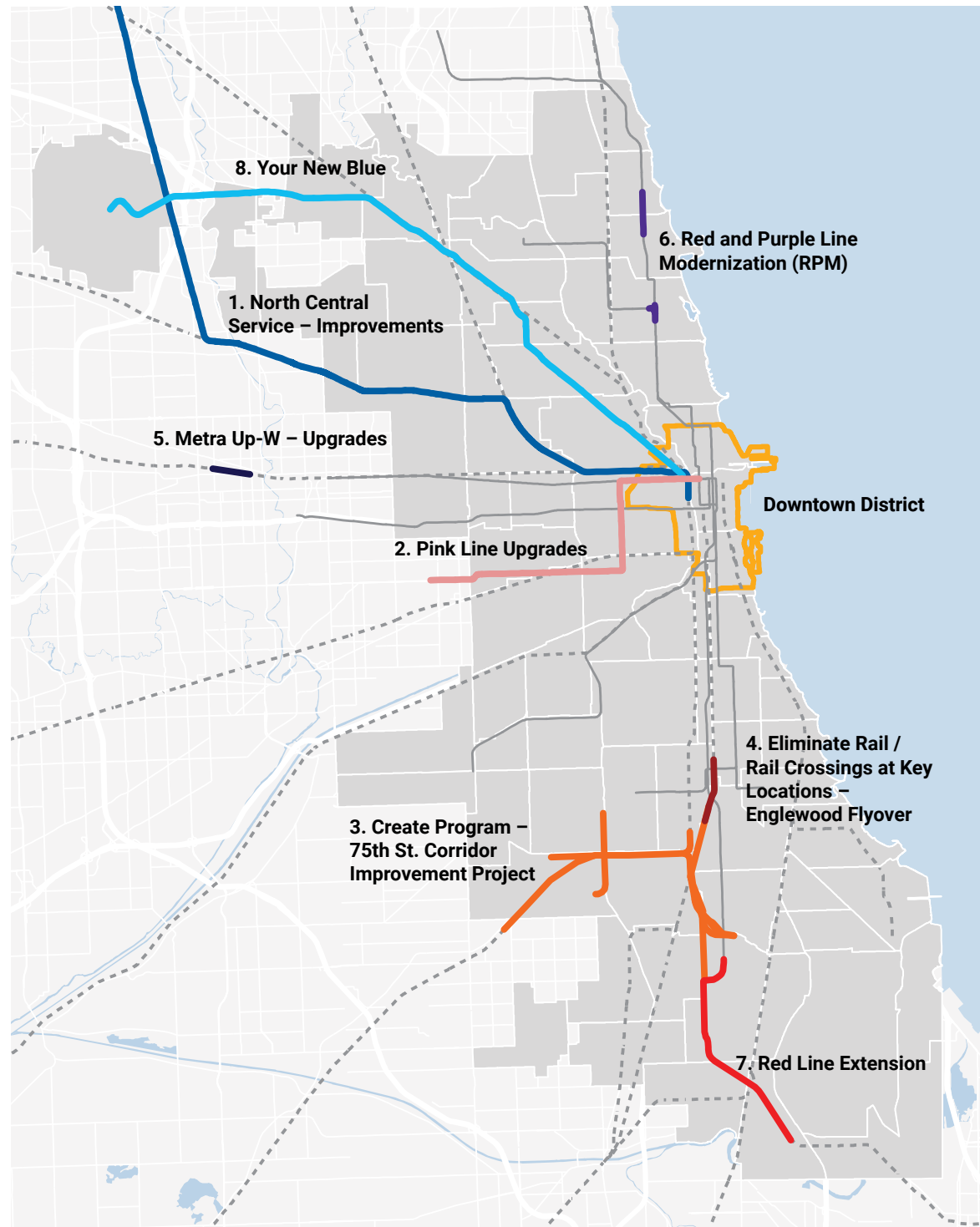






## Regional Rail

Regional rail projects located beyond the Central Area primarily improve existing infrastructure to support commuting in and out of the Central Area.



Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman

## Completed, Ongoing and Under Construction Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
1. North Central Service	Complete	Improvements doubled capacity between Union Station and Antioch in 2006.
2. Pink Line	Complete	Paulina Connector on the Near West Side was upgraded in 2005, enabling Pink Line service to begin in 2006.
3. CREATE Program	Ongoing	The CREATE program's 75th Street Corridor Improvement Project, in coordination with the planned Rock Island Triple Track Project, will allow Metra Southwest Service trains to use LaSalle Street Station instead of Union Station, which will increase capacity at Union Station for use by other routes.
4. Eliminate Rail / Rail Crossings at Key Locations	Ongoing	Planned as a means to reduce area rail congestion, the Englewood Flyover was completed in 2014. Work on planned flyovers in Grand Crossing, Brighton Park and Kensington are paused or yet to be initiated.
5. Metra UP-W – Upgrades	Ongoing	Triple-track improvements were completed by Metra and Union Pacific between Maywood and Melrose Park, while work is in progress or pending for other sections of track.
6. Red and Purple Line Modernization (RPM)	Ongoing	The CTA's Belmont Bypass was completed in 2021 with adjacent track improvements planned for completion in 2025. Rebuilding of the Lawrence, Argyle, Berwyn and Bryn Mawr stations are expected to be completed in 2023. A future phase involving other Red and Purple line station improvements is being planned.
7. Red Line Extension	Ongoing	A proposed 5.6-mile extension from 95th Street to 130th Street is in the final stages of planning and financing. A Red Line Extension Transit-Supportive Development Plan was adopted in 2023.
8. Your New Blue	Ongoing	Improvements to the Damen-California stations and Belmont-Cumberland are complete, along with track improvements between the Logan Square and Clinton stations, as well as a substantial number of signals near the O'Hare terminal.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman





### Unfunded, Planned and Paused Projects

PROJECT	STATUS	PROJECT DESCRIPTION / PROGRESS NOTES
<b>Metra A2 Flyover &amp; Kinzie / FM Infill Station</b>	Planned	Solutions to a Near West Side chokepoint that impacts more than half of Metra riders is being studied, along with a potential new station to serve the growing Near West Side and West Town community areas.
<b>Metra UP-NW – Extension &amp; Upgrades</b>	Planned	Design is underway for the Woodstock Yard; other project elements have not yet begun.
<b>Airport Express Rail Service</b>	Paused	Envisioned as express rapid transit service between the Loop and both Chicago airports along CTA right-of-ways, no active planning is occurring at this time. Metra is leading preliminary concept development for a Metra-based plan that is yet to be finalized.
<b>Blue Line Extension</b>	Paused	Conceived as an extension of the Blue Line from Forest Park to Maywood, CTA has paused further study at this time.
<b>Orange Line Extension</b>	Paused	Conceived as an extension of the Orange Line from Midway to Ford City shopping center, CTA has paused further study at this time.
<b>Yellow Line Extension</b>	Paused	Conceived as an extension of the Yellow Line from Dempster to Old Orchard shopping center, CTA has paused further study at this time.
<b>Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railway (EJ &amp; E) Circumferential Route</b>	Paused	Conceived as the Chicago area’s first suburb-to-suburb rail route, Metra has paused further study at this time.
<b>Metra SouthEast Service</b>	Paused	Conceived as a new rail route connecting LaSalle Street station with Balmoral Park, Metra has paused further study at this time.
<b>Metra STAR Line</b>	Paused	Tentatively planned to connect Joliet, Rolling Meadows and O’Hare Airport, Metra has paused further study at this time.
<b>Mid-City Transitway</b>	Paused	Envisioned for the proposed route of the ill-fated Crosstown Expressway that would circle a portion of the greater Central Area, CTA has paused further study at this time.

Source: City of Chicago, Esri, SB Friedman



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The Chicago Department of Planning and Development's update to the 2003 Central Area Plan comprises two phases. The first phase, completed in 2023, included a review of existing conditions and a visioning process informed by historic progress, recent trends and community input. The second phase, beginning in 2024, will include the development of implementation strategies and recommendations, as well as continued community engagement.

