



1934
MHC incorporates as a non-profit, with membership by invitation.

1934
At the Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago, MHC transforms a Chicago shack into a "Cape Cod Cottage" in one day, proving it's possible to change the city's slums.

1930s

In the 1930s, far too many Chicagoans lived in overcrowded, rat-infested, ramshackle tenement slums without electricity or running water. Poised for change, in 1934, a group of concerned citizens founded the Metropolitan Housing Council (MHC). They wasted no time in advancing their three primary objectives for improving the city's housing stock: enforcing standards, collecting statistics, and promoting neighborhood planning. By decade's end, the Council had made considerable headway in clearing Chicago's slums and established itself as a "no-nonsense" civic powerhouse.

1935
MHC's newly formed Women's Division surveys slums for code violations to pressure the city to hire more inspectors.

1937
MHC influences passage of the Illinois Housing Cooperation Act, which leads to Chicago's first public housing development and the Chicago Housing Authority.

1939
MHC leads the revival of an almost-dormant City Plan Commission, which subsequently is integrated into city government.

1940s
As soldiers shipped off by the thousands, Chicagoans in the early 1940s were acutely aware that World War II colored every aspect of their lives. For MHC, slum clearance remained a major concern; yet the Council also proposed and ultimately led the Chicago region's Defense Housing Committee, charged with managing war-related housing problems. After the war, as reunited families settled into new homes and looked forward to "getting back to normal," the Council ramped up its planning efforts to prepare for growth on a scale never before experienced.

1939
MHC lobbies the Works Progress Administration to finance a Chicago Land Use Survey, using the data as a foundation for its burgeoning neighborhood planning work.

1944
MHC's Post-War Planning Committee makes recommendations for managing the anticipated surge in metropolitan expansion.

1947
MHC publishes a groundbreaking slum clearance plan, sparking city, state and federal-enabling legislation and spurring the creation of the city's Land Clearance Commission in 1948.



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MHC's Post-War Planning Committee makes recommendations for managing the anticipated surge in metropolitan expansion.



1949
MHPC opens membership to the public. The Council successfully argues in favor of closing Cottage Grove Avenue to make way for what eventually became the Lake Meadows development, signaling a new era of modern, racially integrated housing near the Loop.

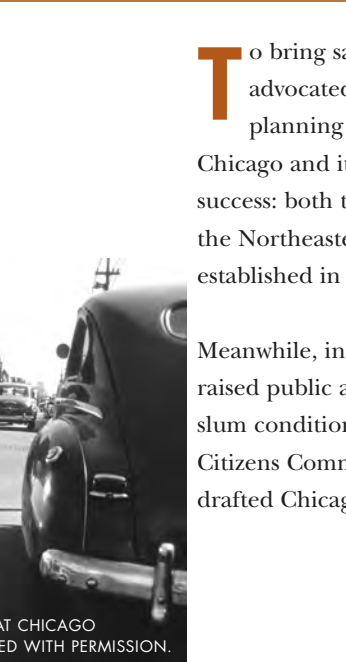
1948
With a nod to its increased focus on regional planning, the Council changes its name to the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council (MHPC).



1952
An MHPC study determines that slum prevention costs less than redevelopment, a finding that advances the Urban Community Conservation Act of 1953.

1956
The Chicago Area Transportation Study is created to provide a 25-year outlook on regional transportation planning.

1957
The Council helps establish the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission to guide units of local government in planning together as a region.



1958
The Council creates the Center for Neighborhood Renewal, which by 1961 would provide technical assistance to help 50 neighborhood groups develop plans to revitalize their communities.

1960
The Council pilots a new approach to low-income housing, providing rent subsidies to allow 100 families to move into existing, private, standard housing.

1961
The Council secures the adoption of a more efficient planning system, requiring governmental bodies to inform the Chicago Plan Commission of proposed construction.

1964
The Committee on Urban Progress issues "Pattern for a Greater Chicago," detailing landmark recommendations for healthy regional growth.

1965
The CHA and federal government adopt MHPC's groundbreaking approach to subsidizing low-income rental housing.

1966
Chicago approves \$195 million in bond issues, a move MHPC championed as reinvigorating community improvement programs without increasing the burden on property taxpayers.

1970
The Council publishes a study on the city's Housing Court, highlighting the importance of thorough inspections in preventing costly urban decay.

1972
Commissioned by the Council, author Lois Wille writes "Forever Open, Clear and Free," a historical account of efforts to preserve Chicago's lakefront.

1973
To protect the lakefront from development – and with strong support from MHPC – the City of Chicago adopts the Lakefront Protection Ordinance.

1975
The Council partners with the Village of Oak Park – and for the first time uses sophisticated computer modeling – to research the management of racial integration.

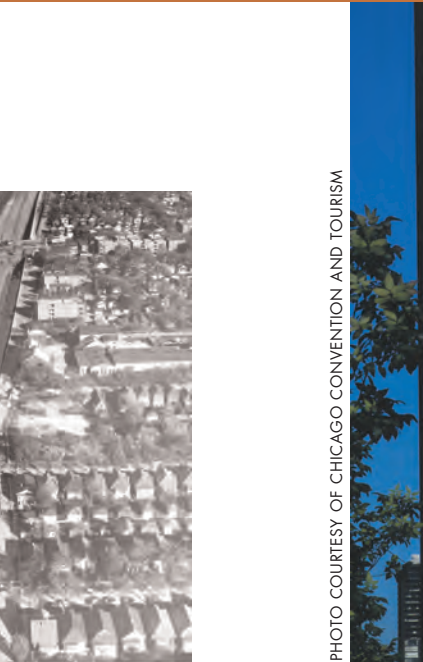
1977
In partnership with other civic groups, the Council proposes a 14-acre addition to Grant Park called the Lakefront Gardens for the Performing Arts, the forerunner to Millennium Park.

1979
The Council recommends that Chicago's North Loop Renewal Project focus primarily on retail concentration, while maintaining State Street's historic character.



1963
The Council co-sponsors a national conference on "Housing the Economically and Socially Disadvantaged," where the idea to create the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was conceived.

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James Otis (1981-1982) John McDonough (1982-1984) James Otis (1984-1985) John Fugard (1985-1987) Jay Buck (1987-1989) Lee Mitchell (1989-1991) Harold Washington (1983-1987, died in office) David D. Orr (1987, served as interim Mayor) Eugene Sawyer (1987-1989) Richard M. Daley (1989-present)



1980
The Council initiates the Second Committee on Urban Progress, later known as the MAP 2000 project.

1983
The Council pushes the Regional Transportation Authority to take on a greater leadership role. The Council launches the Regional Partnership, a network of local leaders.

By 1980, Chicago had lost some 644,000 residents and 118,000 jobs, while the suburbs enjoyed healthy population and job gains. Deemed “on the brink,” the city had a clear mandate to revitalize. As plans were proposed, the Council debated and advised, weighing in on projects such as Navy Pier, McCormick Place expansion and a new Chicago Bears Stadium.

Yet a Council newsletter observed, “Our goal should be to change trends where it is realistic to do so, and to face them creatively where change is unlikely.” Continued suburban growth was inevitable; but the Council pledged to ensure that poorly planned growth was not.

Having headed off the early '80s doomsday predictions, Chicagoans at the turn of the millennium had plenty of reasons to be optimistic about the future of their city: Folks could spend a Saturday at Navy Pier, shop while strolling down the new-old State Street, and enjoy easier access to lakefront museums via the new Lake Shore Drive. As the Internet and e-mail ushered in a new era of global communications, locally the idea of regional coordination began to take hold – and MPC was right there, pushing the envelope.



1990s
1997
The Council leads the Reform '97 campaign, which successfully advocates for statewide school-funding and quality reforms.



1998
MPC, along with hundreds of Chicago-area partners, launches the Campaign for Sensible Growth to advocate for sustainable development.

2000
The federal government passes the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), earmarking critical funds to maintain and improve roads and transit systems.

1981
MHPC releases “Housing Chicago and the Region,” a study of housing supply and opportunities in Chicagoland.

1982
In a series of reports stemming from the MAP 2000 project, the Council recommends capital reinvestment strategies for maintaining regional infrastructure. MHPC publishes a manual on forming and managing housing co-operatives, detailing both benefits and drawbacks.

1985
The Council changes its name to the Metropolitan Planning Council, but continues its historic focus on its housing work, including a new five-year CHA resident empowerment effort. The Council successfully urges the state to take a statewide “infrastructure inventory” and create a five-year capital plan.

1980s

1990
The Council supports a statewide health summit, providing research on community-based healthcare strategies to better ensure equal access to immediate, quality healthcare for Cook County residents.

1992
MPC launches the Regional Civic Initiative, later renamed the Regional Action Agenda, to promote regional vitality through public and private sector cooperation.



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1994
The Regional Public Transportation Task Force, convened by MPC at the Regional Transportation Authority's request, releases final recommendations for meeting Chicagoland's mobility needs.

1995
The Regional Civic Initiative, renamed the Regional Cooperation Initiative, publishes “Creating a Regional Community: The Case for Regional Cooperation.”

1996
In partnership with the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, MPC organizes Business Leaders for Transportation, a coalition of regional employers advocating for improved transportation funding and planning. Lake Shore Drive's new route opens, redirecting traffic to the west of Soldier Field and the Field Museum of Natural History to create the unified Museum Campus.

1999
MPC conducts the Regional Rental Market Analysis, documenting a severe shortage of rental housing and a growing regional jobs-housing mismatch. MPC and Business Leaders for Transportation advocate for Illinois FIRST (Fund for Infrastructure, Roads, Schools and Transit), a five-year, \$12 billion package of statewide capital infrastructure projects.

2001
MPC launches the Employer-Assisted Housing (EAH) program, giving employers the opportunity – and the incentive, thanks to tax credits and matching funds from the state – to help employees purchase homes near work.



RON SCHRAMM

2002
Business Leaders for Transportation issues “Critical Cargo,” a regional freight action agenda that informs the CREATE (Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency) program, a nationally recognized, \$1.5 billion rail infrastructure improvement plan for northeastern Illinois.

2003
City of Chicago amends its zoning ordinance for the first time since 1957. MPC plays a key role in shaping the code and helping communities remap. MPC launches Bold Plans Bright Future, a first ever campaign to raise funds for endowment and special program initiatives.



HOLSTEN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

2000s

No stranger to making connections, MPC at the turn of the century made a conscious decision to strengthen the ties between its own core program areas of housing, transportation, regional development, and urban development. While each program staff was diligently dedicated to its own agenda, common sense revealed clear opportunities to work together to achieve mutual benefits. For instance, by promoting mixed-use development near transit lines, the Council helped to advance regional goals such as preserving open space, creating new economic and affordable housing opportunities, and improving public transit ridership.



RICHARD MARINER

2004
The Council, along with seven statewide partners, launches A+ Illinois, a coalition for comprehensive statewide education funding.

2005
Illinois unveils its first comprehensive, statewide housing plan, which MPC helped shape. Thirty years after MPC began the drumbeat for such an organization, the General Assembly creates Chicagoland's first comprehensive planning entity, the Regional Planning Board, through the merger of the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and Chicago Area Transportation study.