



2023 CHICAGO ENVIRONMENTAL MAYORAL REPORT:

RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR CHICAGO'S MAYOR

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Our Vision	3
Key Recommendations	4
Clean Energy	5
Clean Water & Infrastructure	6
Waste	7
Environmental Justice, Development & Planning/Zoning	8
Local Food	8
Open Space, Wildlife, & Natural Areas	9
Toxics	10
Transportation	10



INTRODUCTION

Since 1975, the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) has worked to safeguard Illinois—its people, its plants and animals, and the natural systems on which all life depends by building power for people and the environment. Representing over 100 environmental organizations operating in Illinois, IEC carries out its mission to advance public policies that create healthy environments across Illinois through education, advocacy, and movement building.





OUR VISION

In this document, IEC and our affiliates propose recommendations for Chicago's mayor. Over the last few years, we've seen significant investment in environmental protection, from updating the City's Climate Action Plan to greening the city's building standards to nearly \$200 million invested in climate-related infrastructure.

However, Chicago still has work to do. Chicagoans are starting to see the greater impacts of climate change – longer, hotter heat waves, polar vortexes, more frequent, intense storms, and increased flooding. And these impacts continue to fall especially hard on Black and Brown communities

which disproportionately serve as dumping grounds for polluting industries.

Our community expects that an environmental mayor and city council will prioritize environmental and environmental justice issues as brought forward by our organizations and will help to pass ordinances, supported by the environmental community, into law and use their offices to promote environmental initiatives more broadly. IEC and our affiliates look forward to working with the winner of the 2023 election to implement each of these priorities in a timely manner.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

✓ Climate Action Strategy.

Chicago's mayor should implement the recommendations from the 2022 Climate Action Plan that include emission reduction targets, zero waste, sustainability measures, and a plan to transition to clean, renewable energy.

✓ Department of Environment.

Chicago's mayor should re-establish the Department of Environment, appoint qualified department heads to all agencies, and ensure adequate levels of staffing in order to effectively implement and enforce all environmental programs.

✓ Environmental Justice.

Chicago's mayor should reform zoning and planning processes for industrial areas such that public health and cumulative environmental impacts are evaluated for sites and communities have robust opportunities for public input into decisions.

✓ Building decarbonization.

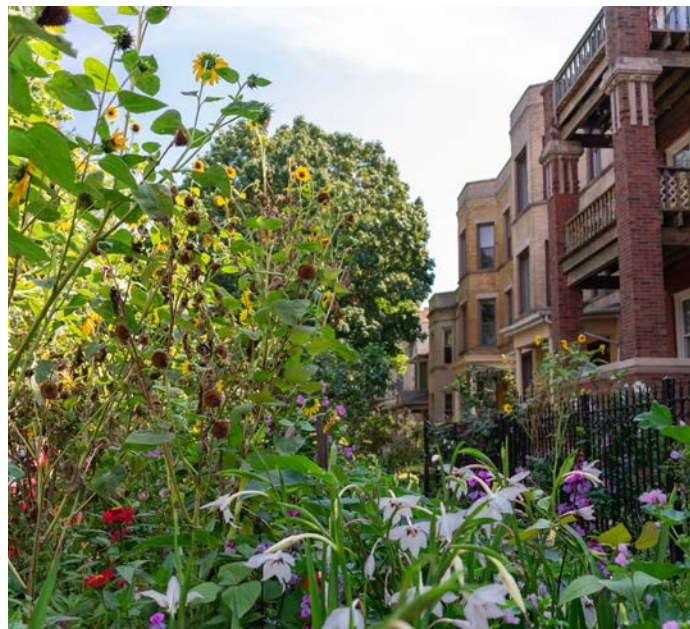
Chicago's mayor should adopt a zero-emissions building energy code for new construction and performance standards for existing buildings that reduce energy usage and carbon emissions to transition Chicago's building stock to be cleaner, healthier, and more affordable.

✓ Transparency and process.

The Chicago mayor's office should be run in a manner that is transparent to the public, with open data policies and a clear and accountable process.

✓ Green investment policies.

Chicago's mayor and the City of Chicago should promote sustainability through green investment policies.





CLEAN ENERGY

1. Ensure the 100% clean energy transition focuses on frontline communities, incorporating equity measures and job training and placement. Ensure that the City's franchise agreement with ComEd, which was due to be renewed in 2020, supports this transition to the greatest extent possible.
2. Adopt a zero-emissions building energy code for new construction and performance standards for existing buildings that reduce energy use and carbon emissions to transition Chicago's building stock to be cleaner, healthier, and more affordable.
3. Support expansion of energy efficiency programs, comprehensive natural gas system planning – including yearly cost-benefit analyses of electrification - and other efforts to address rising gas bills among City residents.



CLEAN WATER & INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Stormwater

- a. Collaborate with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD) to mitigate Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and commit to prioritizing nature-based solutions with their many co-benefits to better stormwater as part of the Greater Chicago Watershed Alliance.
- b. Establish targeted goals for stormwater reduction, with an emphasis on meeting the needs of historically disinvested communities, as well as funding for green infrastructure at a significant scale.
- c. Develop adequate flood mitigation assistance for Chicago residents, especially low-income communities and communities of color that suffer a disproportionate burden of flooding.
- d. Plan for continual expansion and improvement of monitoring.

2. Drinking Water

- a. Accelerate the removal of all lead service lines and actively seek federal dollars to subsidize the associated costs. Prioritize replacement in communities that are at high risk of lead exposure, and include funding sources/mechanisms that do not disproportionately burden low-income communities.
- b. Continue making needed improvements to water infrastructure to improve system performance, reduce leakage, and improve the accuracy of metering data.
- c. Update the water pricing structure so that larger industrial users pay more for their high water use, while households that use lower amounts are charged based on their ability to pay.
- d. Upgrade the City's billing system to accommodate a tiered water rate. Any increase in rates to pay for repairing failing infrastructure must mitigate impacts on low-income households and ensure everyone can access the services they need.

3. Lake Michigan and Chicago's Rivers

- a. Support construction of protections at Brandon Road Lock and Dam to prevent invasive carp from reaching Lake Michigan. This includes continuing to work with Michigan and other Great Lakes states to support funding and construction of these protections.
- b. Update the Chicago Lakefront Protection ordinance to strengthen protection for natural areas along and near the lakefront. Implement nature-based solutions to protect the shoreline from erosion.
- c. Develop a comprehensive master plan for the rivers and adjacent lands that meets the goals of the Great Rivers Chicago vision for inviting, productive, and living rivers throughout Chicago, including the Chicago, Calumet, and Des Plaines Rivers, with a larger emphasis on ecological and community health and biodiversity.
- d. Commit to being the local sponsor for the Bubbly Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project with the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- e. Be an active and engaged member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.
- f. Establish a point person in the Office of Climate and Environmental Equity for interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination on lakes and rivers.

WASTE

1. Plastic Pollution

- a. Develop restrictions to phase out the use of plastic and polystyrene service ware.
- b. Prohibit City facilities from purchasing plastic and polystyrene service ware, plastic bags, and bottles and encourage conversion to reusable options that support a circular economy.
- c. Reduce single-use plastics purchasing and use.
- d. Phase out the use of plastic bags.

2. Recycling

- a. Achieve a waste diversion goal of 43% by the end of a four-year term for residential recycling.
- b. Improve recycling educational efforts to be consistent, accessible, and available in multiple languages.
- c. Require waste, recycling, and organic waste reporting for high-rise, commercial and institutional buildings.

3. Composting

- a. Require buildings and managed communities to allow communal private composting options for their residents.
- b. Expand and codify a citywide composting program that will provide more curbside composting initiatives and better options for our environment and our food waste.
- c. Support the use of end-use compost for landscape maintenance activities at all City properties.





ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING/ZONING

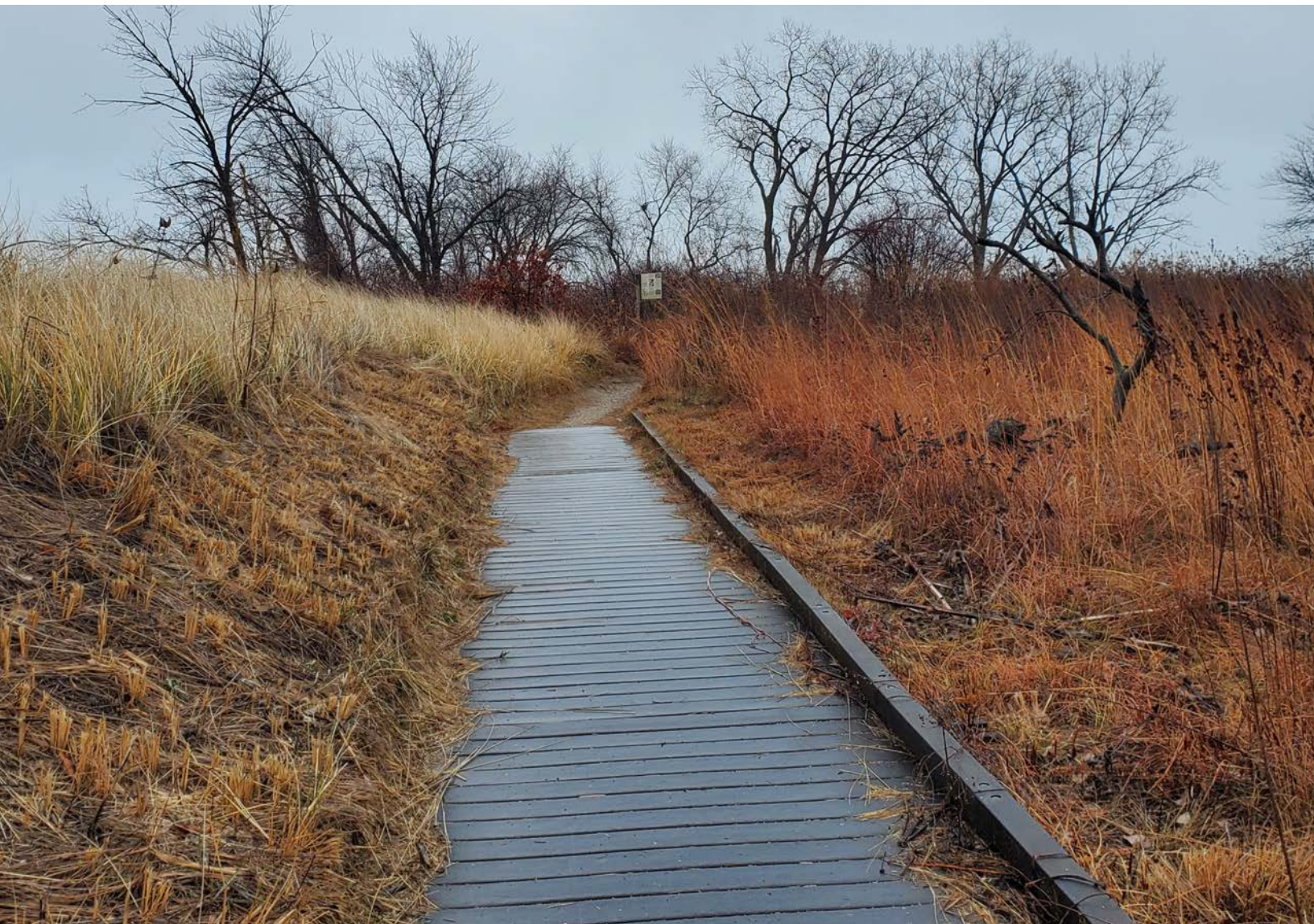
1. Prioritize inclusive community input in the Industrial Corridor Modernization process as a whole.
2. Reform zoning and planning processes for industrial areas such that public health and cumulative environmental impacts are evaluated for sites and communities have robust opportunities for public input into decisions at the Department of Planning and the Plan Commission early and often.
3. Increase city inspection and enforcement training and staffing capacity for environmental violations at industrial sites in Chicago, including fully staffing inspectors authorized in the Department of Public Health budget.
4. Ensure any clean energy transition focuses on frontline communities, incorporating equity measures as well as job training and placement.
5. Implement a plan to remove the cumulative threats of petcoke, manganese, diesel exhaust, and other toxins from environmental justice communities.

LOCAL FOOD

1. Adopt an appropriate business license for urban farm enterprises that allows them to execute their business and production plan to sell whole, unprocessed fruits and vegetables to their target markets, whether on-site or off-site, to wholesale and retail customers.
2. Increase land access for urban farmers.
3. Ensure urban farmers have affordable, reliable access to water infrastructure.

OPEN SPACE, WILDLIFE, AND NATURAL AREAS

1. Expand equitable access to parks for all Chicago residents, including increasing funding for park acquisition and development.
2. Update of the city's Sustainable Development Policy to incorporate bird-friendly design.
3. Along with supporting a bird-friendly design in urban planning, update Chicago's Nature & Wildlife Plan to protect and conserve our local wildlife.
4. Stop the discretionary removal of healthy trees.
5. Update Open Space Impact Fees to increase the amount assessed to developers and allow funding to be distributed in an equitable manner to the communities that need funding most.
6. Continue the expansion and support for the Bureau of Forestry funding including tree planting and care for city trees. Remove administrative barriers that make it logistically difficult and expensive to plant trees.





TOXICS

1. Support a coal tar ban ordinance, and cease the use of coal tar in all municipal projects—prioritizing schools and areas with vulnerable populations.
2. Support a ban on neonic pesticides, and cease the use of neonics in all municipal projects.
3. Support the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and state legislature's efforts to remove PFAS from drinking water and the environment as a whole.
4. Implement standards for clean diesel construction.

TRANSPORTATION

1. Establish policies to encourage the use of sustainable transportation modes (bike, walk, transit) and discourage single-occupant vehicle use.
2. Provide dedicated and sustainable funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure through the establishment of a Chicago Bike and Walk Fund.
3. Prioritize Complete Streets projects for high-crash corridors in historically disinvested communities on the South and West Sides as defined in the city's Vision Zero Action Plans for traffic safety.
4. Upgrade Chicago's rail and bus network to ensure high-quality, reliable, and equitable service.
5. Build the CTA Red Line Extension.
6. Capitalize on the upcoming federal funds to increase EV infrastructure and availability throughout the city.



520 E Capitol
Springfield, IL 62701

www.ilenviro.org

Phone: 217-544-5954

Fax: 217-544-5958

iec@ilenviro.org

 /ilenviro

 @ilenviro

 @ilenviro

 @Illinois Environmental Council

 @Illinois Environmental Council

Since 1975, the Illinois Environmental Council (IEC) has worked to safeguard Illinois—its people, its plants and animals and the natural systems on which all life depends by building power for people and the environment.

