

APRIL 5, 2024

CUT THE TAPE

★ ★ MAYOR BRANDON JOHNSON ★ ★



An initial report on **Mayor Brandon Johnson's** initiative to streamline and expedite housing and commercial development processes, based on **Executive Order 2023-21**

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Letter from **Mayor Brandon Johnson**



My Fellow Chicagoans,

From day one, my administration has worked to confront the challenges facing housing and commercial development in our city. Chicago is facing an affordable housing shortage and struggling business corridors, both resulting in significant inequities in health, wealth, and well-being. While this issue is multifaceted – impacted by historic disinvestment, current economic trends, post-pandemic recovery, and more – what is clear is that the City must work to increase its production and preservation of housing and revitalize business corridors in the areas that need it most.

For far too long we have heard that it is difficult to build in Chicago. We have heard that the City needs to get out of its own way and reduce the hurdles that developers and contractors face when trying to develop housing and commercial properties.

That is why in December 2023, I signed Executive Order 2023-21 requiring 14 City departments to evaluate existing development processes and propose solutions that will remove bottlenecks and accelerate review and approval timelines. I also directed my team to collect ideas from a broad coalition of stakeholders in Chicago – developers, architects, contractors, attorneys, lenders, and more – who will work with us to review our current policies and build a new future together. We want to make navigating the entire development process more accessible, especially for non-profit, emerging, and minority and women-owned businesses who often have the least access to resources.

I am pleased to present this Cut the Tape report and its more than 100 recommendations. My administration will partner with City departments, City Council, and external stakeholders to streamline the City's processes governing development.

We need more housing, more businesses, more investment, and more jobs in our city. I invite you to join me as we break down barriers and cut the tape. This is what systems-level change looks like. Together, we will build a better, stronger, and safer Chicago.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BJ', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Brandon Johnson
Mayor of Chicago



Letter from **Deputy Mayor of Business and Neighborhood Development** and **Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure**



Dear Chicagoans:

Our communities deserve more affordable housing, more world-class architecture, and more inspiring spaces to live and work. This Cut the Tape report is one big step towards advancing that goal.

Since Mayor Johnson issued an Executive Order in December of 2023, our City departments listened to feedback collected from community leaders and development stakeholders. We evaluated ideas for impact and equity. One of the recommendations that we moved on immediately was to create a new position to manage this initiative. As such, we have begun the process of hiring the first-ever Director of Process Improvement – positioned in the Mayor’s Office and empowered to drive systems-level change. Also, in the spirit of co-governance, we are convening a task force to work in partnership with City staff to implement these recommendations as well as to generate new paths for impact.

We recognize that cutting the tape on its own will not usher in an immediate increase in housing options and commercial development. We need to pair this work with dedicated resources to fund development. That’s why the Johnson administration has proposed the \$1.25 billion Housing and Economic Development Bond to ensure we have the resources required to drive development.

Thanks to those who contributed to this report by participating in meetings, focus groups, and sharing written recommendations. We also express gratitude to Chief Operating Officer, John Roberson, for initiating and sponsoring this work; First Deputy of Business and Neighborhood Development, Nneka Onwuzurike, for leading and managing this cross-departmental initiative; countless City staff for designing and refining recommendations ; and lastly to our partners at the Civic Consulting Alliance for helping to steward this work.

Kenya Merritt

Deputy Mayor of Business and Neighborhood Development

Lori Lypson

Deputy Mayor of Infrastructure





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

Problem:

Chicago needs more affordable housing and more vibrant commercial corridors across the city. The City currently has in place longstanding development-related administrative policies and processes, which significantly influence the types, kinds, and locations of developments built. These policies and processes were developed with the intent of advancing resident interests, public health, efficient urban layout, and high-quality design. However, some of these policies and processes, although well-intentioned, can hinder the speed and cost of development.

Solution:

Adopted from the City of New York, the City of Chicago is committed to taking actions across three-strategies:

1. *Build Faster* – speed up the pace of development by streamlining approval processes
2. *Build Everywhere* – allow more housing and businesses to be developed in more places
3. *Build Together* – partner with public, private, & philanthropic stakeholders to create innovative solutions

Build Faster: Cut the Tape Initiative

To kick off the Build Faster strategy, on December 11, 2023, Mayor Brandon Johnson signed Executive Order No. 2023-21 which charged 14 City departments to identify key barriers within the housing and commercial development process that lead to increased timelines, increased costs, and potential uncertainty. It asked departments to recommend solutions to accelerate approvals and to outline implementation plans with key milestones and metrics for success.

This work resulted in more than 100 recommendations categorized in this report that include making key enhancements in communication and accountability across departments; optimizing City resources to improve staffing levels, technology, and technical assistance; and eliminating redundant steps and burdensome requirements throughout the development process. In this report, the City outlines its top 10 Big Bets which include creating a new Director of Process Improvement role in the Mayor’s Office, initiating expedited reviews for affordable housing projects, adopting transformational zoning changes, and streamlining design reviews.

Measuring Success:

Proposed Outputs	Proposed Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Decreased # of total steps in a given development process ❖ Decreased # of weeks for review cycle and permit process ❖ Decreased # of days for turnaround of City feedback at each step of a process ❖ Decreased # of revisions required to be re-reviewed by staff and resubmitted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More units of (affordable) housing are created and preserved ❖ More units of transitional and supportive housing are created and preserved ❖ More commercial developments are created and preserved ❖ Fewer and shorter project delays ❖ Decreased project costs ❖ Increased clarity & transparency from the City ❖ Increased satisfaction with the City process ❖ Improved data collection & tracking ❖ A culture of operational efficiency, iteration, and continuous improvement



Mayor Brandon Johnson signs **Executive Order 2023-21** on December 11, 2023 - giving 14 departments 90-days to identify pain points and solutions in the development approval process



100+ City Staff interviewed across fourteen departments



90+ external stakeholders engaged across six focus groups
Developers, architects, general contractors, lenders, syndicators, attorneys, trades, and more



300+ ideas initially generated and vetted with City departments



6 peer cities researched and interviewed
New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Austin, Boston, Seattle



280+ self-nomination for Cut the Tape co-governance Task Force



Director of Process Improvement role created

Mayor Brandon Johnson publishes **Cut the Tape** report with 100+ recommendations on April 5, 2024



THE PROBLEM



The Problem

Chicago needs more affordable housing and more vibrant commercial corridors across the city. This requires the City to revisit and improve how we use every tool available in the City's toolbox for those seeking to build affordable housing or open up a small business in their neighborhood. The Cut the Tape report sets a course of action and is the first step in compiling and detailing the immediate and near-term departmental actions the City of Chicago will take to start this process.

Chicagoans need more accessible, quality, and affordable housing.

Every Chicagoan deserves affordable, safe, and healthy housing in the community of their choice. Unfortunately, for too many Chicagoans, this is not yet a reality. Across the city, too many neighborhoods have few, if any, affordable options for low- and middle-income families, or are rapidly losing the affordable options they do have. Meanwhile, too many Chicagoans live in buildings with lead pipes, or deferred maintenance, or that lack needed accessibility features. And for tens of thousands of Chicagoans over the course of a year, these issues mean they have no permanent housing at all and are forced to sleep under viaducts or move from couch to couch.

The City of Chicago has a crucial role to play in addressing all of these issues. However, too often, the City's initiatives or programs are stymied by the City's own rules and bureaucracy. The Cut the Tape initiative sets a course of action to address these issues and improve housing-related public services and ultimately housing outcomes for all Chicagoans.

Chicago's housing needs are complex and there is no one-size-fits-all solution, but in general, the construction or preservation of housing—whether City-supported legally restricted affordable housing; new market-rate housing with affordable units under the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO)¹ that relieves pressure in high-cost communities; or new investments on vacant land or to rehab abandoned properties in historically disinvested communities—is one of the most powerful ways to ameliorate these issues.

The most direct way to create affordable housing, of course, is for the City to subsidize the creation of affordable units. The City's Department of Housing (DOH) monitors more than 25,000 such units across the City,² and in a typical year funds the creation or preservation of more than 1,000 units. But with an affordable housing gap of more than 120,000 homes³, this cannot fill the entire need. While more resources are needed, the City also has an obligation to use its existing resources as efficiently as possible. Unfortunately, existing process requirements add meaningfully to the amount of time, staff time, and ultimately public funding that goes into each development. The City and its partners could do more, and more quickly, with more streamlined processes.

In many instances, market-driven housing development can also serve an important role in Chicago's housing ecosystem. While community-driven assessments of development's impact are crucial, especially but not only in neighborhoods where market forces are increasing housing costs and displacing or threatening to displace longtime lower-income residents, in many high-cost communities new multifamily housing can create new housing options for Chicagoans who cannot afford single-family homes. This also reduces the overall competition for housing in high-demand locations that bids up prices. In addition, Chicago's older housing

¹ By City ordinance, market-driven developments of 10 or more units that receive a zoning change, City land, or financial assistance must include an affordable set-aside of 20% of the residential units. Half of those units must be constructed, the other half can be satisfied through "in lieu" payments to the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund, which support rental assistance payments for extremely low-income households and other housing initiatives.

² Chicago Department of Housing [2022 Annual Report](#)

³ DePaul Institute for Housing Studies, [2023 State of Rental Housing in the City of Chicago - Home - Institute for Housing Studies - DePaul University, 2023](#)

stock is almost entirely inaccessible for people with mobility impairments, while newer housing stock built to modern code requirements are more frequently accessible. Finally, but just as importantly, market-driven housing is a major way that Chicago creates more legally restricted affordable housing thanks to the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO). In many of the highest-cost neighborhoods, a majority of the new legally restricted affordable housing created in recent years has been a result of the ARO.

Last, too many Chicagoans share their blocks with vacant land or abandoned homes. These properties can pose health and safety issues, reduce property values, and are missed opportunities to provide more housing options that support local schools and commercial corridors. The City should never stand in the way of positive redevelopment of vacant land or buildings that contribute to communities. While meaningful progress has been made over recent years through tools like ChiBlockBuilder, there is more work to do to make sure that the City is not adding unnecessary and unhelpful hurdles that slow work and add costs.

Chicagoans need more vibrant business and commercial corridors.

Commercial corridors are the economic backbone of communities, providing convenient access to goods and services, restaurants, entertainment, and other quality-of-life amenities, in addition to providing job opportunities for residents. Commercial corridors also serve as cultural hubs for communities – honoring the legacy of the community through public art and performance venues, providing gathering spaces for neighbors to connect and socialize, and hosting small businesses that add to the neighborhood’s unique identity.

Across the city, commercial corridors have been impacted by a variety of factors – including the rise of big box retailers, shifting consumer trends towards e-commerce, increased remote and hybrid office work in a post-pandemic world, and significant barriers to entrepreneurship. Commercial corridors are also impacted by a lack of housing density. Fewer neighbors means less foot traffic to neighborhood businesses, fewer people traveling to the corridor to work, shop, and socialize.

Unfortunately, many commercial corridors on the South and West sides have historically been neglected by public and private investors and developers. The decades of systemic disinvestment have limited opportunities for neighborhood growth, vibrancy, and wealth-building. COVID-19 added to this disparity by creating more challenges for many businesses in these neighborhoods (especially restaurants and retailers) due to periods of shutdowns, decreased foot traffic, and reductions in economic activity.

Some commercial corridors on the South and West sides of Chicago are reporting storefront vacancy rates as high as 43%.⁴ In a post-pandemic economy, storefront vacancy is also a significant problem for some formerly strong submarkets including the Loop, which has a retail vacancy rate topping 30%⁵ amid an overall downtown office space vacancy of over 23%⁶ at the end of 2023.

Over time, it has become clear that one of the most critical contributors to this disparity is the immensely challenging access to capital in neighborhoods of color. An Urban Institute report found that Chicago’s majority-white neighborhoods receive 4.6 times as much market investment per household as majority-Black neighborhoods, and 2.6 times as much investment as majority Latine neighborhoods.⁷ Additionally, the originations of small business loans in Chicago’s non-white neighborhoods account for just 25.2 percent of all

⁴ Neighborhood Network Alliance, South Shore Chamber of Commerce, South Shore Works.

⁵Herzog, R (2024, March 5) Loop retail vacancy tops 30% for the first time. Crain’s Chicago Business.

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/commercial-real-estate/loop-retail-vacancy-reaches-new-high>

⁶ Ecker, D (2024, January 10). Downtown office vacancy ended 2023 at another record high. Crain’s Chicago Business.

<https://www.chicagobusiness.com/commercial-real-estate/downtown-office-vacancy-chicago-2023-record-high>

⁷ 1 Theodos, Brett, Eric Hangen, Brady Meixell, and Prasanna Rajasekaran. 2019. Neighborhood Disparities in Investment Flows in Chicago. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

lending in the City, and falls short of the number of active businesses in those areas (28.3 percent of all active businesses in the City).⁸

To address these challenges, Mayor Brandon Johnson has proposed a \$1.25 billion housing and economic development bond, of which \$400–500 million over the next five years would go to sustaining and modifying the Department of Planning and Development’s Community Development Grant (CDG) program, which supports real estate development projects that result in rehabilitation or new construction of commercial, industrial, or mixed-use properties. CDG leverages the success of the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund program to make investments in business and housing opportunities that build household and community wealth, activate vacant storefronts to stabilize critical commercial corridors, and redevelop sites of critical importance that will catalyze further development. While the program is available across the entire City, it prioritizes projects in disinvested neighborhoods and areas with limited private investment, which are over-proportionally Black and Latine communities on the South and West Sides.

However, funding is not the only issue. Capital is necessary, but not sufficient to solve the scale of the problem needed to both invest in the built environment and in the success of local small businesses and entrepreneurs. Too often, the City’s initiatives to catalyze more commercial investment and small business growth are stunted by burdensome City processes and policies.

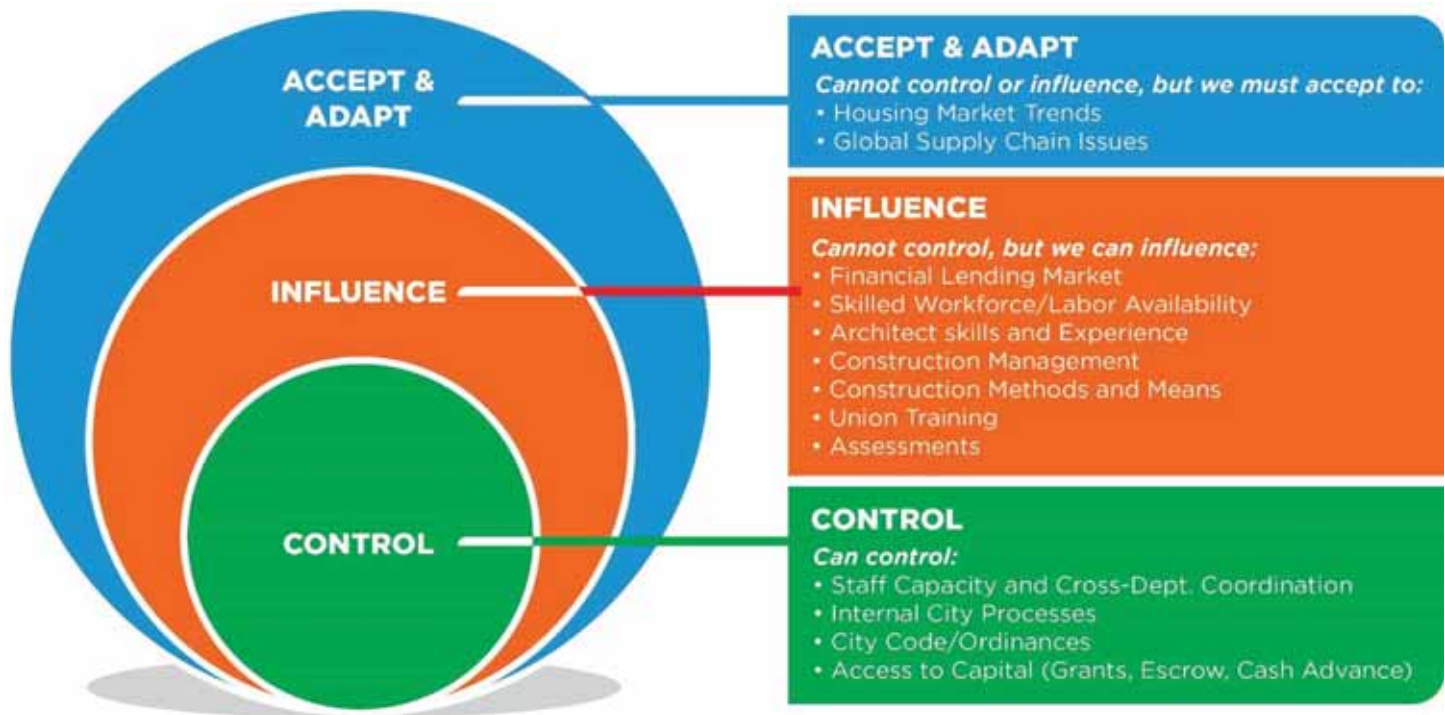
Our neighborhoods are poised for additional commercial development to renovate existing buildings, redevelop vacant land to house businesses, and activate spaces for public plazas. The Cut the Tape initiative will be a start in addressing many of these barriers and position Chicago to be an attractive business destination for small businesses, entrepreneurs, developers, and corporations.

What factors contribute to the production of housing and commercial development?

There are many factors that contribute to the slow production of housing and commercial development – see image pictured below. There are factors that are out of the City’s control that we must learn to accept and adapt (e.g. market trends, rising interest rates, global supply chain issues). There are issues that the City can influence but cannot control (e.g. lending market, labor availability, etc.). Lastly, there are issues that are completely within the City’s control (e.g. staff capacity, cross-departmental coordination, City code, access to public capital, and more).

Through the Cut the Tape initiative, the City of Chicago will focus primarily on what we can control.

⁸ 12 Walsh, John and Karolina Ramos. 2022. Measuring the Flow of Private Capital in Chicago’s Communities: Lending Gaps and implications for Community Reinvestment Legislation. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.



City policies and processes were developed with the intent of advancing resident interests, public health, efficient urban layout, and high-quality design. However, the City recognizes that some of these policies and processes, although well-intentioned, can hinder the speed and cost of development.

Better, more efficient processes that enable more development and reduce costs are not the entire solution, but they are a critical part of it. The City is committed to working with partners to more quickly develop a variety of housing options and commercial corridors.



OUR STRATEGY



Build Faster
Build Everywhere
Build Together.⁹





⁹ Framework borrowed from the City of New York, Office of the Mayor



STRATEGIC PILLAR	BUILD FASTER	BUILD EVERYWHERE	BUILD TOGETHER
INITIATIVE	CUT THE TAPE	FAIR HOUSING AGENDA	PARTNERSHIPS
OVERVIEW	<p>Streamline the City’s internal discretionary policies and regulations to speed up the pre-development and development approval process. Initiated by Mayor Brandon Johnson’s Executive Order 2023-21</p>	<p>Build upon the Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing to allow for more housing to be developed citywide and to address the equitable allocation of affordable housing resources; partner with City Council to explore legislation to address the greatest barriers to housing production.</p>	<p>Formalize partnerships with public, private, & philanthropic stakeholders to create innovative solutions. Launch a Cut the Tape task force with 20-30 external stakeholders, including developers, general contractors, architects, attorneys, lenders, and more</p>
EXAMPLES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimizing City staff time • Cross-team collaboration • Permitting • Zoning • Design review • Environmental Review • Financing and contracting • Boards and Commissions • Data & performance management systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher density zoning • Expansion of the Additional Dwelling Units (ADU) pilot program • Preserve naturally occurring affordable housing • Development strategy for City-owned land • Targeted housing production goals by community area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut the Tape Task Force • Partnerships with Cook County, especially Land Bank and Assessor’s Office • Partnerships with State of Illinois • Philanthropic Roundtables • Partnerships with Technical Assistance Providers



Build Faster: Cut the Tape Initiative

 <p>VISION</p>	<p>There is an abundance of housing and commercial development in all community areas, giving Chicagoans a diverse supply of quality and affordable options to live, work, and do business.</p> <p>Developers and entrepreneurs are eager to collaborate with the City and see us as partners that make the process efficient, accessible, and equitable.</p>
 <p>MISSION</p>	<p>To identify key pain points in the City’s development processes that cause delays; to co-design solutions that will streamline the process and thus increase the pace of development.</p>
 <p>VALUES</p>	<p>Equity Ease Consistency Transparency Predictability Proactiveness Responsiveness Accessibility</p>
 <p>GOALS</p>	<p>Coordinate Enhance communication and collaboration across relevant City departments and external stakeholders in order to improve systems, culture, and processes.</p> <p>Streamline Improve internal City policies and update regulations by eliminating redundant steps and burdensome requirements.</p> <p>Invest Optimize department staff and leverage technology solutions to modernize process across City departments.</p>



OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES



Outputs & Outcomes

The effectiveness of the Cut the Tape initiative will be measured by key outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact. The metrics proposed below are meant to provide a meaningful starting point for discussions around accountability. The City will partner with Task Force members to refine how we measure and track progress.

Outputs – quantitative data focused on the work accomplished by this initiative

- ❖ Decreased # of total steps in a given development process
- ❖ Decreased # of weeks for review cycle and permit process
- ❖ Decreased # of days for turnaround of City feedback at each step of a process
- ❖ Decreased # of revisions required to be re-reviewed by staff and resubmitted
- ❖ Increased % of documents submitted that are complete and accurate
- ❖ Decreased # of complaints

Outcomes – benefits or changes for development teams and residents during or after initiative

- ❖ More units of housing created and preserved
- ❖ More commercial developments created and preserved
- ❖ Fewer and shorter project delays
- ❖ Decreased project costs
- ❖ Increased transparency with City departments
- ❖ Increased satisfaction with City processes
- ❖ Improved data collection & consistent tracking
- ❖ Improved use of technology in City approval process
- ❖ Increased simplicity, efficiency and transparency
- ❖ Clear and consistent submittal requirements for each process step

Long-Term Impact – the long-term consequences of the initiative

- ❖ Variety of housing options available citywide for people to choose
- ❖ Improved quality of life for all Chicagoans by providing housing and vibrant corridors
- ❖ Trust and faith in government processes and partnerships
- ❖ Increased capacity and quantity of developers, architects, and general contractors
- ❖ A culture of operational efficiency, iteration, and continuous improvement

Demonstration Cases – The City will create accountability by collecting feedback on multiple project types going through different stages of development review. Potential cases will be gathered from different types of development including, but not limited to:

- ❖ Single family housing
- ❖ Multifamily rental housing
- ❖ Commercial development
- ❖ Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) development
- ❖ Shelter or transitional housing
- ❖ City-owned vacant lot development
- ❖ Rehabilitation of existing building



TOP 10 BIG BETS



Mayor Brandon Johnson's **Top 10 “Cut the Tape” Big Bets**

- 1 Cross-Department Coordination:** Create a new Director of Process Improvement role in the Mayor's Office
- 2 Policy:** Initiate expedited reviews for affordable housing projects
- 3 Zoning:** Adopt transformational zoning changes, including eliminating minimum parking requirements, streamlining special use permits, and more
- 4 Boards & Commissions:** Evaluate the feasibility of streamlining the Community Development Commission (CDC) and Chicago Planning Commission (CPC)
- 5 Design & Construction:** Streamline the Department of Housing's (DOH) Architectural and Technical Standards (ATS) manual
- 6 Design:** Reduce the number of internal design review meetings in the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) from three to one; reassess the role of the Committee on Design
- 7 Environmental Review:** Eliminate Phase 1 & 2 environmental reviews as a requirement for sale for environmentally-cleared City-owned parcels
- 8 Finance:** Expand the pilot for cash advance payment options
- 9 Finance:** Create an online “City wallet” account to improve options for customer billing, online payments, and debt check
- 10 Procurement:** Evaluate the feasibility of reducing the administrative burden of the City's Economic Disclosure Statement (EDS), including expanding expiration dates, allowing exemptions for select projects that receive an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and more

See the end of this report for a full list of the more than 100 recommendations.



1. Cross-Departmental Coordination: Create a new Director of Process Improvement in the Mayor's Office

Description: By creating this dedicated role, the City will have a point person to facilitate coordination and accountability across all departments involved in the City's real estate development process. This new role will be responsible for implementing and driving the recommendations in this report, data collection & analysis, and more. Additionally, this Director will lead a cross-department roundtable to maintain visibility over critical projects and troubleshoot challenges.

Timeline: 3 months

Decision maker: Mayor

Owner: Mayor's Office, Business and Neighborhood Development

Support: All departments

2. Policy: Design a process to initiate expedited reviews of affordable housing development projects

Description: Chicago is currently experiencing a significant shortage of affordable housing units, with estimates that Chicago needs an additional 120,000 affordable units to meet the demand.¹⁰ Mayor Johnson pledged to tackle this shortage by accelerating the production of affordable housing in Chicago. In line with this commitment, the Mayor's Office will partner with relevant departments to explore the design of an expedited review and approval process for affordable housing development projects (e.g., building permit review, accessibility reviews, restoration agreements, environmental review, etc.).

Timeline: 6 months

Decision maker: Mayor

Owner: Mayor's Office, Business and Neighborhood Development

Support: All departments

3. Zoning: Advance legislation to adopt transformational changes to the City's zoning code, including eliminating minimum parking requirements, streamlining special use, and more

Description: Zoning and land use policies are essential to preserving the unique character and quality of the city's neighborhoods. However, overly restrictive zoning policies can impede the approval process. Mayor Johnson will advocate for the adoption of transformative zoning changes aimed at both building faster and building everywhere by directing relevant departments to work in collaboration with Chicago City Council. This will begin by taking bold steps including proposing legislation to eliminating minimum parking requirements citywide¹¹. This will benefit developers by streamlining the entitlement process, reducing time and costs, and allowing for more design flexibility. This will also benefit residents by creating denser, more walkable, and transit-friendly developments.

Timeline: 12+ months

Decision maker: City Council

Owner: Mayor's Office, Business and Neighborhood Development

Support: Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Law, Department of Planning and Development, Zoning Board of Appeals, Department of Housing

¹⁰ DePaul Institute of Housing Studies, [2023 State of Rental Housing in the City of Chicago](#), 2023

¹¹ The City has undertaken steps to reduce parking requirements for transit-served locations. In 2022, Chicago passed the Connected Communities Ordinance, a sweeping equitable transit-oriented development zoning reform ordinance that cut parking minimums as low as zero on nearly every commercial corridor in the city, as well as in high-density residential districts; created additional density bonuses and incentives for affordable and accessible housing.

4. Boards & Commissions: Convene a working group to evaluate the feasibility of streamlining the Community Development Commission (CDC) and Chicago Plan Commission (CPC)

Description: With the goal of reducing the time required for projects to meet with each separate commission, this working group will conduct a comprehensive review of the current processes, objectives, and decision-making frameworks of both commissions. This group will focus on identifying opportunities to consolidate the commissions' review processes (e.g. joint meetings, potential full consolidation of the commissions into single body) with the aim of reducing bureaucratic hurdles while maintaining transparency and accountability.

Timeline: 9 months

Decision maker: City Council

Owner: Department of Law

Support: Department of Planning and Development

5. Design & Construction: Launch a working group to update and streamline the Department of Housing's (DOH) Architectural and Technical Standards (ATS) Manual

Description: The Architectural Technical Standards (ATS) manual is a support tool for developers, architects, and general contractors that guides the design and construction of City-funded affordable housing projects. DOH invests in housing units and the people who live in them by providing funding for safe, healthy, and quality homes, where families are free to focus on what matters most in their lives. When the requirements of the ATS are met, families can achieve a better quality of life for their families. With these values in mind, this working group will gather feedback in order to update and streamline the ATS manual so that City-funded affordable housing projects can be built faster, while maintaining high standards that meet the needs of all households.

Timeline: 6 months

Decision maker: Commissioner

Owner: Department of Housing

Support: N/A

6. Design: Reduce the number of Department of Planning and Development's internal design review meetings from 3 to 1 and reassess the role of the Committee on Design

Description: Chicago is world-renowned for its design and architecture, but the process of moving projects through the design review process can sometimes be overly burdensome, time-consuming, and unclear. The design review process has been a pain point for external stakeholders, adding time and confusion to the overall process. To make the design review process more efficient, while maintaining high-quality design, DPD has reduced the number of internal design review meetings and is reimagining the Committee on Design.

Timeline: Complete

Decision maker: Commissioner

Owner: Department of Planning and Development

Support: N/A

7. Environmental Review: Eliminate Phase 1 & 2 environmental reviews as a requirement for sale for environmentally-cleared City-owned parcels

Description: The Department of Law will assess additional DOH and DPD land sales to identify transactional risks and options for reduced levels of environmental review that do not jeopardize the health and safety of our residents. For City land sales available through the City Lots for Working Families (CL4WF) program, the City has recently eliminated Phase 1 & 2 environmental review requirements as a condition of sale for environmentally-cleared parcels.

Timeline: 9 months

Decision maker: Mayor's Office, Business and Neighborhood Development

Owner: Fleets and Facilities Management

Support: Department of Law, Department of Environment, Department of Housing, Department of Planning and Development

8. Finance: Expand the pilot for cash advance payment options

Description: The City primarily uses a reimbursement model for payments, meaning developers and other professionals bear the risk of financing a project and only receive funding from the City upon certain project milestones. While this reimbursement approach reduces the risk of loss of taxpayer funds, it can be an obstacle for developers, particularly emerging developers. The reimbursement model also drives up project costs, as the City's contractors or development partners are frequently forced to pay for working capital while awaiting repayment. To make it easier for developers to move high-impact projects forward, the City will expand its pilot to improve and streamline cash advance payment options.

Timeline: 9 months

Decision maker: City Comptroller

Owner: Department of Finance

Support: Office of Budget and Management, Department of Law, Department of Planning & Development, Department of Housing

9. Finance: Create online "City wallet" account to improve options for customer billing, online payments, and debt check

Description: Completing a financial transaction with the City can be a confusing process. Customers often engage with several different departments directly, inputting redundant information, and waiting on slow procedures in order to transfer and receive funds. To create a more user-friendly experience, the City will roll out a "City wallet" which aims to serve as a one-stop-shop for transacting with the City.

Timeline: 12+ months

Decision maker: City Comptroller

Owner: Department of Finance

Support: Department of Technology and Innovation, Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, City Clerk

10. Procurement: Launch a working group to determine how to reduce the administrative burden of the City's Economic Disclosure Statement (EDS), working toward expanding expiration dates, allowing exemptions for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects, and more

Description: The EDS is an important due diligence document, but the current process for completing it adds significant time and frustration to the development process. This working group will explore possible avenues for reducing that time and complexity, including extending the expiration date to one year, excluding it from the

Right of Entry (ROE) due diligence process for short-term uses, removing the requirement for developers awarded Low Income Housing Tax Credits from either DOH or the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), and digitizing the entire process. While this group will explore ways to streamline EDS submission, they will also ensure the City maintains necessary financial due diligence and satisfies requirements from relevant City ordinances and state laws.

Timeline: 6 months

Decision maker: City Council

Owner: Department of Law

Support: Department of Procurement Services



COMPLETE LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS



Complete list of recommendations

As part of Mayor Johnson’s goals to expedite and streamline housing and commercial development, the Cut the Tape initiative has generated **more than 100 initial recommendations** in the immediate, near-term, and long-term. Recommendations are organized across the following themes:

Coordinate

- Dedicated Mayor’s Office staff
- Cross departmental collaboration
- Culture and relationship building

Streamline

- Approval committees
- Design review
- Environmental review
- Financing and contracting
- Permitting
- Zoning

Invest

- Data & performance management systems
- Digitizing documents
- Optimizing department staff
- Technical assistance

Note that the method for implementing recommendations will vary by lead department and decision maker:

- Mayor’s Office and City departments are tasked with administrative and interdepartmental actions to revise City procedures and create City workgroups to develop internal process changes to simplify and standardize processes.
- Lead departments are directed to work with City Council to develop proposals for changes to adopting new code – subject to approval by City Council.

See Appendix A for a list of the 14 departments listed in the Executive Order and their acronyms.

No.	Theme	Lead Dept.	Recommendation	Support Dept.	Decision maker	Timeline
1	Dedicated Mayor’s Office staff	Mayor’s Office	Create a Director of Process Improvement role in the Mayor’s Office to manage Cut the Tape improvements across City departments and sister agencies	All depts	Mayor	3 months
2	Cross dept collaboration	DTI	Allow department staff to have visibility and access to the data and project management systems in other departments	All depts	Commissioner	6 months

3	Cross dept collaboration	Mayor's Office	Create a cross-departmental roundtable to review and monitor development projects in the City's pipeline – from application through project closing	All depts	Mayor	3 months
4	Cross dept collaboration	Mayor's Office	Design a process for expedited review of affordable housing development projects	All depts	Mayor	6 months
5	Cross dept collaboration	Mayor's Office	Launch the Cut the Tape task force (comprised of 20-30 experts and practitioners in housing and commercial development) to support the City with strategy, implementation, and measuring the success of this initiative	All depts	Mayor	3 months
6	Culture and relationship building	Mayor's Office	Increase team building activities across City departments to build relationships and a collaborative working culture	All depts	Deputy Mayor, Business and Neighborhood Development	3 months
7	Approval committees	DOL	Convene a working group to explore consolidating the Community Development Commission (CDC) and Chicago Plan Commission (CPC) into a single body or to have joint meetings to streamline processes	DPD	City Council	9 months
8	Approval committees	DOL	Use the City's home rule authority to amend the Municipal Code to state that land sales and acquisitions that the CDC has approved do not need to be approved by the CPC	DPD	City Council	6 months
9	Approval committees	DPD	Propose that the City only present City-owned land sales to the Chicago Development Commission (CDC) if the land has acquisition, remediation, or vertical construction that is subsidized with TIF dollars		Commissioner	6 months

10	Approval committees	DPD	Revisit the contents of the City Council slide template and eliminate unnecessary or duplicative information		Commissioner	3 months
11	Design review	CDOT	DOB, DPD, and CDOT to proactively inform applicants and staff of processes that need Office of Underground Construction (OUC) review, and ensure cross-department staff meetings can handle reviews efficiently and conflicts are communicated early	DWM, DOB, DPD	Commissioner	9 months
12	Design review	CDOT	Optimize staff positions and review code requirements to identify ways to make the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) Plan Review Committee (PRC) process faster	OBM, Council	City Council	6 months
13	Design review	CDOT	Issue jointly-developed transportation & planning principles that establish review thresholds and interdepartmental submission requirements to review and approve site plans, driveway configurations, traffic analysis and signal review	DPD, DOH	Commissioner	9 months
14	Design review	DOH	Launch working group to update and streamline DOH's Architectural and Technical Standards (ATS) Manual		Commissioner	6 months
15	Design review	DOH	Reduce design review burden for development of single-family homes via city programs like City Lots for Working Families (CL4WF)	DPD	Commissioner	6 months
16	Design review	DOH	Reduce closing timelines for affordable housing projects by streamlining interaction between DOH and DPD design review and related internal and external committees and voting bodies	DPD	Commissioner	Complete

17	Design review	DPD	Reduce the number of internal design review meetings from 3 to 1 and assess how to best engage DPD's Committee on Design going forward		Commissioner	Complete
18	Design review	DPD	Establish consistent design criteria (e.g. facade materials) by producing additional guidelines for non by-right developments including zoning, industrial, ground-floor commercial, ground-floor residential		Commissioner	12 months
19	Design review	DPD	Continue to explore processes to consolidate design review feedback from multiple departments (DPD, DOH, CDOT, MOPD) using standard templates and timelines so developers know what is expected	CDOT, MOPD, CFD, DWM	Commissioner	3 months
20	Design review	DPD	Finalize pre-approved designs to create faster options to build more affordable housing	DOH	Commissioner	9 months
21	Design review	DWM	Improve coordination of underground engineering and utilities with DWM prior to final submitted plans	DPD	Commissioner	3 months
22	Environmental review	2FM	Create environmental checklist for developers	DPD, DOH, DOL	Commissioner	3 months
23	Environmental review	2FM	For each City land sale program, explore the feasibility of reducing or eliminating Phase 1 & 2 environmental review as a requirement for sale for environmentally cleared parcels	DOL, DOE, DOH, DPD	Mayor's Office	9 months
24	Environmental review	2FM	For CL4WF land sales, eliminate Phase 1 & 2 environmental review as a requirement for sale for environmentally-cleared parcels	DOL, DOE, DOH, DPD	Mayor's Office	Complete

25	Environmental review	2FM	Complete additional environmental screening for 30% of the remaining approx. 4,500 City-owned parcels that are not yet listed on ChiBlockBuilder		Commissioner	9 months
26	Financing and contracting	2FM	Exclude EDS from Right-of-Entry (ROE) and temporary occupancy process	DTI, DOL, DPD	City Council	6 months
27	Financing and contracting	DOF	Commit to paying vouchers within 30 days		Commissioner	12+ months
28	Financing and contracting	DOF	Expand the pilot program for cash advance payment options	OBM, DOL, DPD, DOH	Comptroller	9 months
29	Financing and contracting	DOF	Explore the possibility to expand the City's debt relief ordinance to include nonresidential buildings and vacant lots, with appropriate guardrails to avoid moral hazard	DWM, DOL, CFO	City Council	12 months
30	Financing and contracting	DOF	Revamp the debt-check process –eliminating inconsistent results and excessive reviews – to ultimately reduce turnaround times for buildings, permits, and licensing	BACP, DOL	Commissioner	9 months
31	Financing and contracting	DOF	Improve City's scofflaw check process to add transparency and decrease project closing delays	DOH, DTI	Mayor	6 months
32	Financing and contracting	DOH	Develop and publish process maps that comprehensively describe the City's multifamily financing and closing process	DTI	Commissioner	3 months
33	Financing and contracting	DOH	Eliminate the policy that General contractors (GCs) who work with developers to develop project scopes are excluded from bidding on the project	DOL	Commissioner	6 months

34	Financing and contracting	DOH	Seek City Council approval to grant DOH commissioner authority to administratively approve the transfer of volume cap in bulk to CHA and IHDA for projects that meet City goals	OBM, IGA, DOL, CFO	City Council	6 months
35	Financing and contracting	DOH	Provide more transparency on the City's Bi-Annual Qualified Allocation Plan (LIHTC award) announcements including: clear public timeline, releasing all applicants' information, all applications, and a map of finalists		Mayor	12+ months
36	Financing and contracting	DOH	Seek City Council approval to allow the DOH commissioner to administratively approve the restructuring of affordable housing projects (under a certain threshold)	DOL, IGA	City Council	6 months
37	Financing and contracting	DOH	Streamline project checklist & milestones from the start of application to the start of closing and begin reviewing documents on a rolling basis		Commissioner	3 months
38	Financing and contracting	DOH	Eliminate the review of developer-GC contracts by the DOH Construction Compliance team. Instead, implement an affidavit indicating GC has sole responsibility for assuring compliance with ATS Manual	DOL	Commissioner	6 months
39	Financing and contracting	DOH	Explore alternative approaches to managing change orders and contingency for City-funded affordable housing projects.		Commissioner	9 months
40	Financing and contracting	DOH	Eliminate the minimum three-bid requirement for General Contractor on any DOH-funded rehabilitation project that are subject to ATS Manual, allowing the developer to select GC noncompetitively in order to include them earlier in the design process		Commissioner	3 months

41	Financing and contracting	DOH	Explore a public-private partnership to fund a guaranty facility to allow emerging developers to access capital required to secure construction loans needed to develop large, city-financed projects	DOF	Commissioner	9 months
42	Financing and contracting	DOH, DPD, DOL	Develop a better process for clearing property taxes on City-owned land prior to offering it for sale on ChiBlockBuilder		Commissioner	12+ months
43	Financing and contracting	DOH/DPD	Develop an internal tracking system at DOH/DPD Finance that allows for purchase order setups and payment requests to be tracked	DOF, DTI	Commissioner	9 months
44	Financing and contracting	DOL	Remove requirement for due diligence searches on newly formed sole purpose entities, instead requiring searches only on the owners of the newly formed entities		DOL	6 months
45	Financing and contracting	DOL	Explore technology platforms that will allow departments to better organize and track closing documents, beyond the current exchange of documents via email	DTI	DOL	12+ months
46	Financing and contracting	DPD	Dedicate funds annually to a DPD Pre-Development Grant fund to reimburse costs associated with services and deliverables necessary for capital project development or feasibility		City Council	3 months
47	Financing and contracting	DPD	Consolidate DPD Capital Grant funding requirements, structures, and sources of three programs into two grant tracks: Medium and Large		City Council	3 months
48	Financing and contracting	DPD	Create a variety of mechanisms to address the wide range of financial support (including low-cost loans) that will help address access to capital challenges for businesses		City Council	3 months

49	Financing and contracting	DPD	Create a checklist to make the steps for Redevelopment Agreement (RDA) execution and payment requisition clearer	DOL	Commissioner	3 months
50	Financing and contracting	DPD	Initiate a working group to identify specific requirements that can be eliminated from the closing process		Commissioner	6 months
51	Financing and contracting	DPS	Evaluate the feasibility of reducing the time it takes for the City to issue vendor RFPs by 50%	DOH, DPD	Commissioner	12+ months
52	Financing and contracting	DTI	Explore the feasibility of using electronic signatures on contracts		Commissioner	3 months
53	Permitting	2FM	Publish a clear checklist to convey City-owned land that will include –paperwork to submit, lack of clear title, issues with city-issued full payment certificates and other easily preventable delays		Commissioner	3 months
54	Permitting	BACP	Re-write the business license website to make finding and applying for licenses more user-friendly	DTI	Commissioner	3 months
55	Permitting	DOB	Improve permit inspection request website to streamline data entry, reduce unnecessary inspection trips, and provide more transparency to customers about the status of their requests	DTI	Commissioner	6 months
56	Permitting	DOB	Align Chicago Construction Codes with current national model codes and standards, including modernizing the Mechanical Code in 2024 and Building Code in 2025	DOL	City Council	12+ months
57	Permitting	DOH	Develop and publish consistent insurance requirements for DOH-supported housing developments (including purchasers of City-owned vacant land)	DOF, DOL	Mayor	6 months

58	Permitting	DOH	Launch working group to determine how to improve internal coordination on ARO processes from intake through lease-up	DPD	Commissioner	3 months
59	Permitting	DOH	Expand the City's Encumbrance Ordinance to enable the clearing of City fines and fees from City-owned vacant lots; to include any debt owed to city, including but not limited to: water or sewer assessment; money owed to the City pursuant to a court order or an order from the Department of Administrative Hearings (DOAH); or demolition liens	DOL, DOF	City Council	9 months
60	Permitting	DOH, DPD, 2FM	Transition all relevant departments to using a digital Economic Disclosure Statement form only	DPS	Commissioner	6 months
61	Permitting	DOL	Launch a working group to determine how to reduce the administrative burden of the City's Economic Disclosure Statement (EDS)– exploring extending the expiration period, allowing exemptions for projects that receive an allocation of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, and more	DPS	City Council	6 months
62	Permitting	Mayor's Office	Review Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) and Dept of Buildings (DOB) responsibilities to optimize staffing and increase speed of accessibility reviews	MOPD, DOB, OBM	Mayor, City Council	9 months
63	Permitting	Mayor's Office	Establish a working group to clarify jurisdiction of Dept of Water Management (DWM) and Dept of Buildings (DOB) to clearly define responsibilities and process for internal and external stakeholders	DWM, DOB, DOL	Chief Operating Officer	9 months

64	Permitting	Mayor's Office	Establish a working group to reevaluate responsibility for fire-system permitting between Chicago Fire Dept (CFD) and Dept of Buildings (DOB)	DOB, CFD	Chief Operating Officer	9 months
65	Permitting	Mayor's Office	Advocate for a state law to streamline requirements for residential accessibility based on current national standards, improving the accessibility of new housing statewide and removing unnecessary barriers. This legislation is currently pending as Illinois Senate Bill 2989 and Illinois House Bill 5242	MOPD, DOB	General Assembly, Governor	12+ months
66	Permitting	MOPD	Require documents by the permit applicant that demonstrate either a successful voluntary pre-permit HUD design review or a voluntary third-party design review by an accessibility consultant	DOH	Commissioner	6 months
67	Zoning	BACP	Eliminate Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) approval of a special use permit to open a hair salon, barber shop, body art shop, or nail salon	DPD, DOL	City Council	3 months
68	Zoning	DOH	Explore Universal Affordability Preferences that would allow buildings to add more housing by-right without triggering a planned development, but only if the additional units are affordable		City Council	12+ months
69	Zoning	DOH	Revisit zoning code elements that functionally require all shelters and transitional housing developments to seek approval from ZBA, regardless of building size, form, or underlying zoning designation	DPD, DFSS, ZBA	City Council	6 months

70	Zoning	DPD	Amend the Chicago Zoning Ordinance to allow applicants for Type 1 zoning changes to incorporate requests for variations and administrative adjustments into Type 1 zoning change applications – eliminating the duplicate review processes		City Council	Complete
71	Zoning	DPD	Develop a working group to study improving the current ordinance for select Special Sign District regulations		City Council	6 months
72	Zoning	DPD	Allow Public Place of Amusement (PPA) variation to be processed as a part of Type 1 zoning amendment in coordination with BACP	IGA, BACP	City Council	Complete
73	Zoning	DPD	Create better, more user-friendly templates for zoning submission documents		Commissioner	9 months
74	Zoning	DPD	Accept electronic signatures and PDF copies of original signatures for components of zoning applications	Clerk, DTI	Commissioner	3 months
75	Zoning	DPD	Add site photos to the application checklist to give applicants an option to provide photos preemptively, especially for administrative adjustments	ZBA	Commissioner	6 months
76	Zoning	DPD	Allow commercial-to-residential conversions of ground floors while exempting those conversions from additional residential parking requirements	DOH	City Council	6 months
77	Zoning	DPD	Allow ground floor residential uses on commercial corridors with excessive vacancy	DOH	City Council	6 months
78	Zoning	DPD	Explore options to post DPD's special use recommendations online at ZBA website seven days before hearing date	ZBA	Commissioner	6 months

79	Zoning	DPD	Pass ordinance to allow for up to four issues to be heard as administrative adjustments before a ZBA hearing is required	ZBA, DOL	City Council	Complete
80	Zoning	DPD	Create an interdepartmental working group to streamline special uses and variations by shifting most applications to administrative review processes, while retaining the ZBA's more in-depth evaluation for applications that warrant an increased level of public scrutiny	DOL, ZBA	City Council	12+ months
81	Zoning	DPD	Allow multiple administrative adjustments to not be reviewed as variations, allowing certain parking reductions by right, and investigating whether other variations needed for housing projects may be addressed via administrative adjustment	DPD, DOH, ZBA	City Council (Zoning)	6 months
82	Zoning	DPD	Eliminate minimum off-street parking requirements on new developments citywide	Mayor's Office, DOH, IGA, DOL, ZBA	City Council	9 months
83	Zoning	DPD	Remove zoning barriers to City's Non-Congregate Shelter Acquisition program, allowing existing buildings to be repurposed as shelters or transitional residences	DOH	City Council	6 months
84	Zoning	ZBA	Develop a more simplified public hearing packet	DOL	City Council	6 months
85	Zoning	ZBA	Provide sample forms to clarify the Reasonable Return Economic Analysis form needed for ZBA	DOL	City Council	3 months
86	Zoning	ZBA	Explore options for ZBA to post applications, plans, findings of fact, and staff recommendations to its website		Commissioner	6 months

87	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DOB	Move all Department of Building (DOB) permit application types to the City's online Inspections, Permitting & Licensing Portal to provide enhanced customer service and transparency	DTI, DPD, DWM	Commissioner	12+ months
88	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DOB	Improve the ability of permit applicants to check the status of their plan-based building permit applications without creating an account or logging in	DTI	Commissioner	Complete
89	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DOF	Create online "City wallet" account to improve options for customer billing and online payments	DTI, BACP, City Clerk	Comptroller	12+ months
90	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DOH	Speed up DOH's ability to process home repair and related small construction programs from application through completion of construction, including implementation of new software solutions	DTI	Commissioner	12 months
91	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DOH	Implement new internal software to manage application, document collection, financial underwriting, and construction management processes for multifamily affordable development	DTI	Commissioner	12+ months
92	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DTI	Review and integrate department websites that reference each other's processes to ensure consistent communication with the public		Commissioner	6 months
93	Data & performance mgmt. systems	DTI	Create a technology solution to increase the transparency of development documents submitted and their status, so users can monitor and trace the progress of their applications in real time	All relevant depts	Commissioners	12+ months

94	Digitizing documents	2FM	Digitize Right of Entry (ROE) process and forms as well as provide examples of completed forms	DPD, DTI	Commissioner	3 months
95	Digitizing documents	DPD	Explore options to digitize applications that are subject to review by the Chicago Plan Commission (CPC)	Council	DOL, Clerk, DPD, Committee on Zoning	6 months
96	Digitizing documents	DPD	Digitize process for required delivery of floor plans and XLS materials prior to Chicago Plan Commission	DOL	Commissioner	6 months
97	Optimizing dept staff	DOF	Optimize staff capacity in Risk Management to support reviews of Certificates of Insurance	OBM	Comptroller, Budget Director	6 months
98	Optimizing dept staff	DOH	Optimize staff capacity to process Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) covenants to speed up permitting of projects subject to the City's ARO program	DPD	Commissioner	6 months
99	Optimizing dept staff	OBM	Conduct staffing study to identify City's capacity constraints and how this is impacting the City's approval processes	DOB, DHR	Budget Director	12+ months
100	Optimizing dept staff	OBM	Optimize finance staff in DPD and DOH to speed up payments	DOH, DPD, DHR, OBM, DOF	Commissioner	9 months
101	Technical assistance	DOB	Improve customer guidance about what to expect during the permitting and construction processes by adding additional content and features to the Online Guide to Building Permits, including an interactive Permits Step-by-Step feature	DPD, DTI	Mayor	9 months
102	Technical assistance	DOB	Consider establishing a mandatory annual online training for expeditors and contractors to ensure they are aware of their duties and responsibilities as part of the permitting and construction process and under the City's ethics ordinance	DTI, OBM	Commissioner	12+ months

103	Technical assistance	DPD	Support third-party organizations to develop technical assistance and capacity building programs for emerging and MWBE developers		Commissioner	9 months
104	Technical assistance	DPD	Provide examples of completed application documents that meet the criteria and standards of DPD		Commissioner	9 months
105	Technical assistance	DPD	Standardize review process across applications for all project types, in particular for developments that are not subject to review from the-Chicago Plan Commission (CPC)	DOH	Commissioner	3 months
106	Technical assistance	Mayor's Office	Publish standardized directories with each department required to follow a standard structure to facilitate communication and transparency with internal and external stakeholders	DTI	Deputy Mayor BND	3 months
107	Technical assistance	MOPD	Create a series of training classes to focus on different accessibility code and technical issues to improve submissions of construction documents submitted for permit		Commissioner	9 months



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APPENDIX



Appendix A: List of 14 Departments referenced in Executive Order 2023-21

	Department	Example roles related to development process
1	Department of Planning & Development (DPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design review • Zoning review • Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) • Facilitate City-owned land sales • Community planning • Regulatory approval • Financial incentives • Economic development initiatives / programs
2	Department of Housing (DOH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design review • Pre-construction, construction, and post-construction review for multifamily developments • Multifamily development funding • Affordable housing developments
3	Department of Buildings (DOB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction code development • Permitting • Permit-related inspections • Complaint-based inspections • Trade licensing
4	Department of Water Management (DWM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and sewer main review • Water service inspections • Service connection, repair, and disconnection permitting • Hydrant use permitting
5	Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permitting • Public infrastructure maintenance & administration • Public infrastructure construction • Transportation planning • Underground inspection / review
6	Fleet and Facilities Management (2FM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental review • City-owned property management
7	Department of Law (DOL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal review
8	Department of Technology and Innovation (DTI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital applications / services • Data portals

9	Department of Finance (DOF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reimbursements • Risk assessment • Revenue collections • Fines and fees management • Full payment certificates • Payroll and invoicing • Auditing and City accounting
10	Department of Procurement Services (DPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract issuance
11	Department of Business Affairs & Consumer Protections (BACP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing • Public way permitting • Business compliance
12	Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Home modifications • Transportation and parking planning
13	Department of Environment (DOE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental policy and review support
14	Office of Budget and Management (OBM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget • Grant management • Capital improvements

Appendix B: Broader Context

Mayor Brandon Johnson is committed to fostering a prosperous and inclusive Chicago for all by making strategic investments in people, businesses, and neighborhoods. The Cut the Tape report centers one strategy, part of a three-pronged approach to building faster, building everywhere, and building together.

To bolster the Cut the Tape initiative, the City of Chicago is seeking out additional resources – most notably through the City’s recent application for \$10 million to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Pathways to Removing Obstacles for Housing (ProHousing) program to address the critical barriers that hinder development.

The recommendations in this report offer the opportunity to provide more efficient and effective government processes, however, this on its own, will not be enough to address the challenges confronting Chicago’s housing supply and commercial corridors. Cut the Tape builds upon other Johnson administration initiatives to address Chicago’s housing and economic development, including:

Dedicated Revenue through Public Finance Tool

- **Housing and Economic Development Bond** – The Johnson Administration has been working to restructure the City of Chicago’s approach to equitable neighborhood development through a proposal to issue a \$1.25 billion bond over five years to maintain and grow the City’s investments in affordable housing and economic development. Bond funds would be split evenly between affordable housing programs run by the Department of Housing (DOH) and economic development programs run by the Department of Planning and Development (DPD). Bond-supported programs include multifamily housing financing, homeownership assistance, preservation of single room occupancy housing, small business capacity building, workforce development, and a buildout of DPD’s Community Development Grant. With the additional stability and flexibility of bond funding, the existing and new programs run by DOH and DPD can have more impact on Chicago’s communities. While funds can be used citywide, project selection criteria will continue to emphasize the most impactful projects, project feasibility, and projects located in historically disinvested areas.

Investments in the Creation and Preservation of Affordable Housing

- **Selection of 2023 Investments in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Awards** – Mayor Brandon Johnson and the Department of Housing announced 13 transformative affordable housing development awards to receive Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) through the Department of Housing’s competitive process called the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP). The 13 developments will create and preserve over 1,300 affordable rental units across the City. Total development costs including public and private sources are estimated at \$562 million.
- **Downtown Revitalization** – Mayor Brandon Johnson has advanced four adaptive re-use projects within the Loop’s historic financial district to convert underutilized office buildings to housing. Representing more than \$528 million in total investments, four projects will repurpose 1.3 million square feet of vacant space, creating housing for all. The four projects will create more than 1,000 homes, including more than 300+ affordable units.

Co-Governance and Partnerships

- **Downtown Advisory Committee** - will leverage the business and tourism expertise of 40 area professionals. To meet quarterly under the direction of the Mayor’s Office, the group will work with other advocates to further transition the central area into a vibrant, mixed-use environment while also helping to shape the recommendations and implementation needs of the Central Area Plan Update, which will be finalized in 2024 as a guide for downtown growth. Committee members are anticipated to be announced this spring.

- **ALL INside Initiative** – a new federal partnership to address unsheltered homelessness. The City of Chicago, as one of seven sites selected nationally, will partner with the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) and 19 federal agencies to strengthen local efforts to move unsheltered people off the streets and rebuild their lives. A key element is reaching and responding to those individuals using physical infrastructure as a shelter of last resort, including viaducts, trains, transit stations, and highways.

These initiatives together provide a strategic approach toward making the City of Chicago a City that works for its residents and provides economic development and housing opportunities necessary to navigate the post-COVID urban landscape. Cut the Tape is only one piece of this administration's work but is a critical initiative to help ensure we are building a greater Chicago for all.

