

Budget Statement to the Chicago City Council Commissioner Gia Biagi, Chicago Department of Transportation

Good afternoon, Madame Chair and Members of the City Council. Thank you for having the Chicago Department of Transportation before you today. I look forward to answering your questions and discussing the work CDOT is doing to maintain and improve mobility and transportation infrastructure in every Chicago neighborhood.

With more than 4,000 miles of streets, 2,000 miles of alleys, 8,000 miles of sidewalks, 300 bridges, nearly 3,000 signalized intersections, and over 300,000 street and alley lights, CDOT oversees one of the largest and most complex transportation networks in the country. To keep Chicago moving safely and efficiently, CDOT is committed to maintaining these assets in a state of good repair.

Our approach is guided by our Strategic Plan for Transportation we released last year which emphasizes equity, safety, mobility, and lowering the economic and environmental burden of transportation. And thanks to Mayor Lightfoot's leadership and the support of the City Council, the Chicago Works capital plan is helping us invest in neighborhoods to spur economic growth, job creation, and improve the overall quality of life.

This year we have made progress on a number of significant projects.

- We completed the first year of operation of our Smart Lighting Modernization Program, improving nighttime visibility, operational efficiency, and reducing the city's energy consumption and cost. In fact, the program will cut Chicago's electricity bill by \$100 million in its first ten years.
- We broke ground on Jackson Park Mobility Improvements in support of the Obama Presidential Center. The construction contract includes a 15 percent local hire target to ensure that local residents benefit.
- We broke ground on the long-awaited Damen/Lake Green Line Station, which fills an important transit gap on the Near West Side, supporting transit-oriented development.
- We are nearly complete on several major bridge projects like the 100-year-old Webster Avenue Bascule Bridge over the North Branch of the Chicago River and the 43rd Street Pedestrian Bridge over Lake Shore Drive to the Lakefront.
- We are moving forward on Streetscapes all over the city, including on all 12 Invest South/West corridors. By the end of the year, we expect to break ground on the first three Invest South/West projects (Austin, Back of the Yards, South Chicago) that will provide safe, walkable, and welcoming streets.

In addition to these major projects, we have been making an unprecedented number of safety improvements on our streets to reduce traffic crashes and ensure that everyone can move around our city comfortably, regardless of their mode of transportation.

These investments could not come at a more critical time, as traffic fatalities in the United States and in Chicago have risen at an alarming rate since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are taking an all-hands-on-deck approach to address these issues, including making infrastructure improvements that deter speeding and enhance safety, especially for people walking, biking, or rolling.

CDOT is on pace to install more than 400 projects in 2022 to improve safety and comfort for people walking, including curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, and high-visibility crosswalks. That's over 1,000 pedestrian safety projects since 2020. And we have standardized these improvements in our Arterial Street Resurfacing program. In fact, our 50 miles of Arterial Resurfacing projects this year include 250 pedestrian safety improvements.

We have also continued to rapidly expand Chicago's bikeway network, adding more than 100 miles added since Mayor Lightfoot took office. Thanks to the Chicago Works program, we've averaged about 40 miles of new bikeway investments per year, compared to an average of 23 miles prior to 2020. These historic improvements include expanding Chicago's protected bike lane network to provide increased safety for all road users. This year, we began a new program to upgrade all existing plastic-protected lanes to concrete curbs, a program that will be complete by the end of next year.

Finally, I want to highlight the neighborhood services CDOT provides that are critical to the quality of life in your wards and for your constituents. By the end of this year, CDOT will have:

- Paved more than 90 miles of residential streets and 50 miles of arterial streets
- Installed 9,000 ADA accessibility ramps
- Replaced 2,000 street light poles
- Planted 5,000 new trees, more than 4,000 of them on the south and west sides
- Refreshed more than 200 miles of pavement markings
- Filled 474,000 potholes

I also want to note that these accomplishments came during a year of unprecedented challenges for our region's construction industry. This summer, at the height of construction season, a seven-week quarry strike severely limited CDOT and our contractor's access to aggregate material, such as sand, gravel, and stone needed for asphalt and concrete.

Despite the strike and other challenges, such as material shortages and supply chain issues, CDOT has worked to minimize delays, keep projects moving, and make up for lost time. I can't say enough about the professionalism and hard work of the CDOT staff in working through these challenges.

It's my honor to serve as Commissioner and to work in partnership with City Council and the communities you represent. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that our transportation network provides the highest quality service to all of Chicago. Thank you.