



# **Working with Communities: Equitable Outreach & Engagement Strategies**

**Kyra D. Woods, City of Chicago**

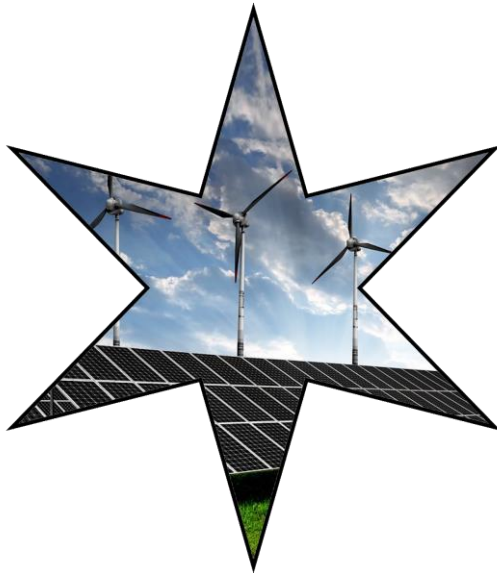
**2023 Midwest Energy Solutions Conference**

**February 2023**

# A Just and Equitable Climate Future for Chicago



Center Equity  
and  
Environmental  
Justice



Uphold  
Commitment  
to Climate  
Goals



Address  
Profound  
Environmental  
Challenges



Generate  
Economic  
Benefits for  
Local  
Communities

# Chicago's Equity Guiding Principles

1. Build a culture of inclusion and diversity
2. Deepen our spectrum of engagement
3. Routinize equity impact analysis in our process and practice
4. Invest in our healing
5. Be accountable for equitable progress



# 2022 Climate Action Plan Equitable Decarbonization Our Roots Chicago



**Now Available!**

# Chicago's 2022 Climate Action Plan



**Chicago.Gov/ClimateActionPlan**



**Equitably investing in  
community health  
and climate resilience  
while reducing  
Chicago's carbon  
footprint 62% by 2040**



**Now Available!**

# Chicago's 2022 Climate Action Plan



**Chicago.Gov/ClimateActionPlan**



- **Language Access**
  - **Digital Access**
  - **Literacy Levels**
- **Community Building**







# 2022 CAP

CHICAGO CLIMATE  
ACTION PLAN



## A Closer Look At What's Inside



# ★ Equity Considerations Throughout CAP



- How can actions provide savings?
- How can actions enrich or expand the local economy?
- How are burdens and benefits currently experienced?
- How are programs and services made available? Are those with the greatest needs connected?



# CITY OF CHICAGO

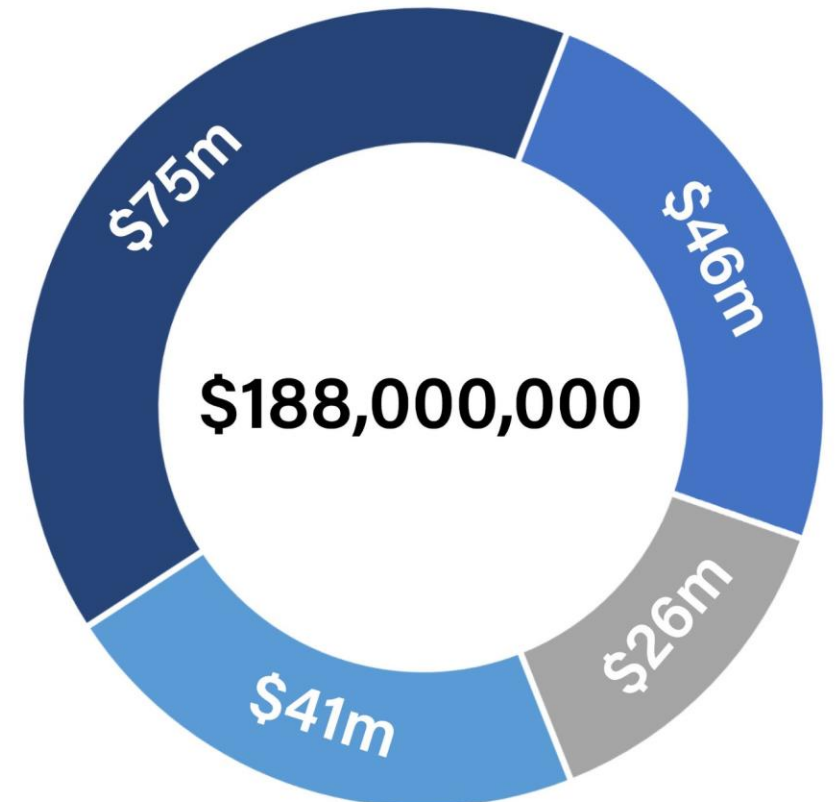
## Environmental Justice and Climate Investments

COMMUNITY +  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
JUSTICE INVESTMENTS

EQUITABLY GROWING  
THE TREE CANOPY

ENERGY AND  
EQUITY

GREEN  
INFRASTRUCTURE





City of Chicago

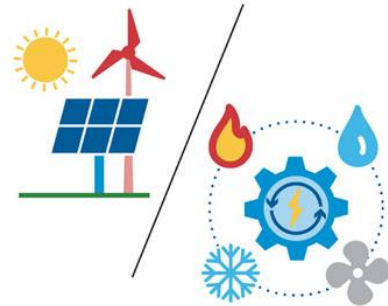
# Climate Infrastructure Fund



## Program Description

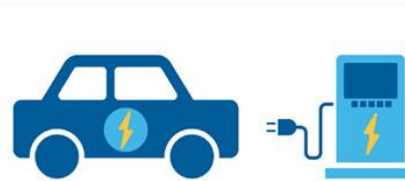
As part of the Department of Planning and Development's ongoing efforts under the Chicago Recovery Plan, the Climate Infrastructure Fund (the Fund) provides grants from \$50,000 to \$250,000 to nonprofit organizations and small businesses for climate-related capital projects in three priority areas:

### Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency



Energy efficiency upgrades and/or on-site renewable energy

### Electric Vehicles and EV Charging



Purchase of electric vehicles and/or installation of electric vehicle charging stations

### Green Infrastructure

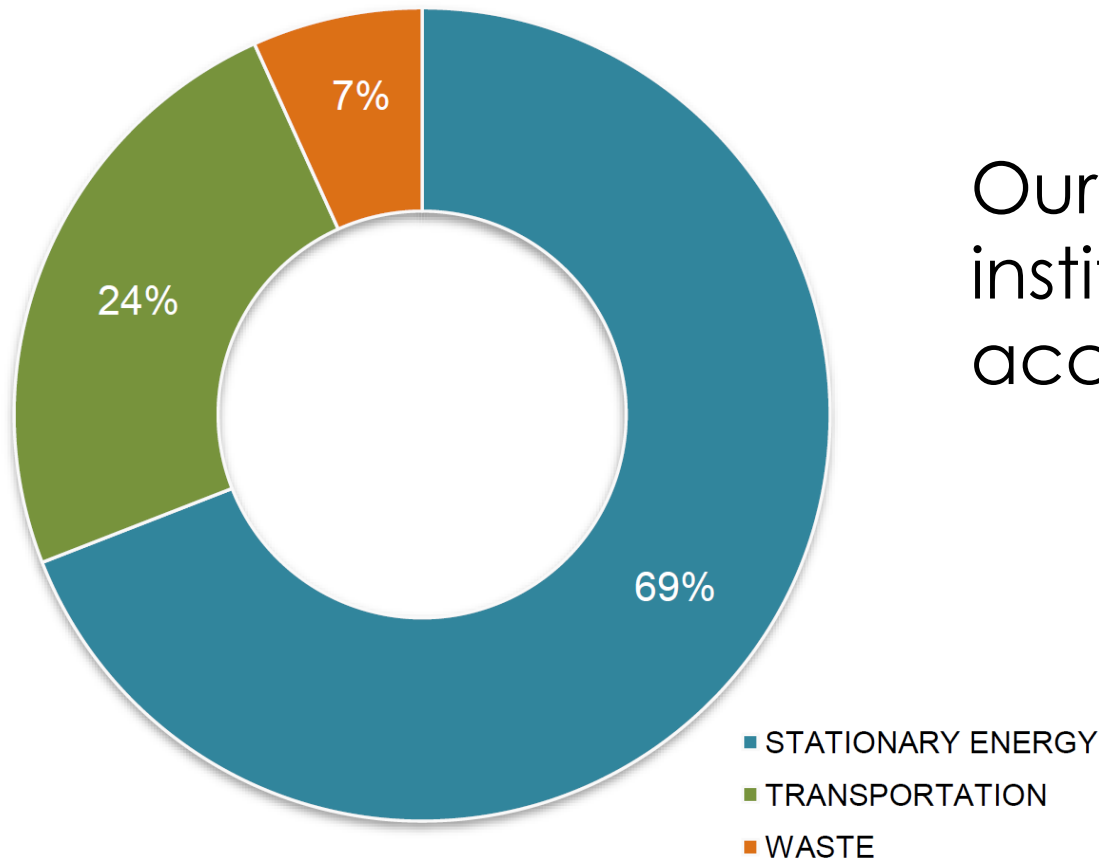


Mitigation of flooding by rain gardens, permeable paving, native plantings, etc.



# Equitable Decarbonization in Buildings

# ★ Chicago's built environment represents the largest portion of our emissions profile.



Our residential, commercial & institutional, and industrial buildings account for nearly 70% of city's emissions





# The Working Group

- 54 Working Group members
  - Supported by Project Team: Office of Sustainability; other City of Chicago staff; NRDC; Delivery Associates; and Elevate
- 11 big ideas:
  - New construction
  - Retrofits for existing buildings
  - Programmatic and technical support

*Several members not pictured*



# ★ Working Group urged to develop building decarbonization recommendations that...



- **Lower economic burdens** on residents and businesses
- **Reduce energy insecurity** for communities of color
- Use an **equity lens** to assess the costs and burdens of strategies
- Create **economic and health benefits** for those who need them the most

Installation of a “solar flower” garden in Bronzeville, as a result of a public-private partnership.



# Our Roots Chicago



An aerial photograph of Chicago, showing the city's dense urban landscape. In the foreground, a highway with multiple lanes curves through the scene. The middle ground is filled with a mix of residential and commercial buildings, interspersed with green trees. In the background, the iconic Chicago skyline rises against a hazy sky, with Lake Michigan visible on the right side.

# CHICAGO WORKS

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES  
THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE



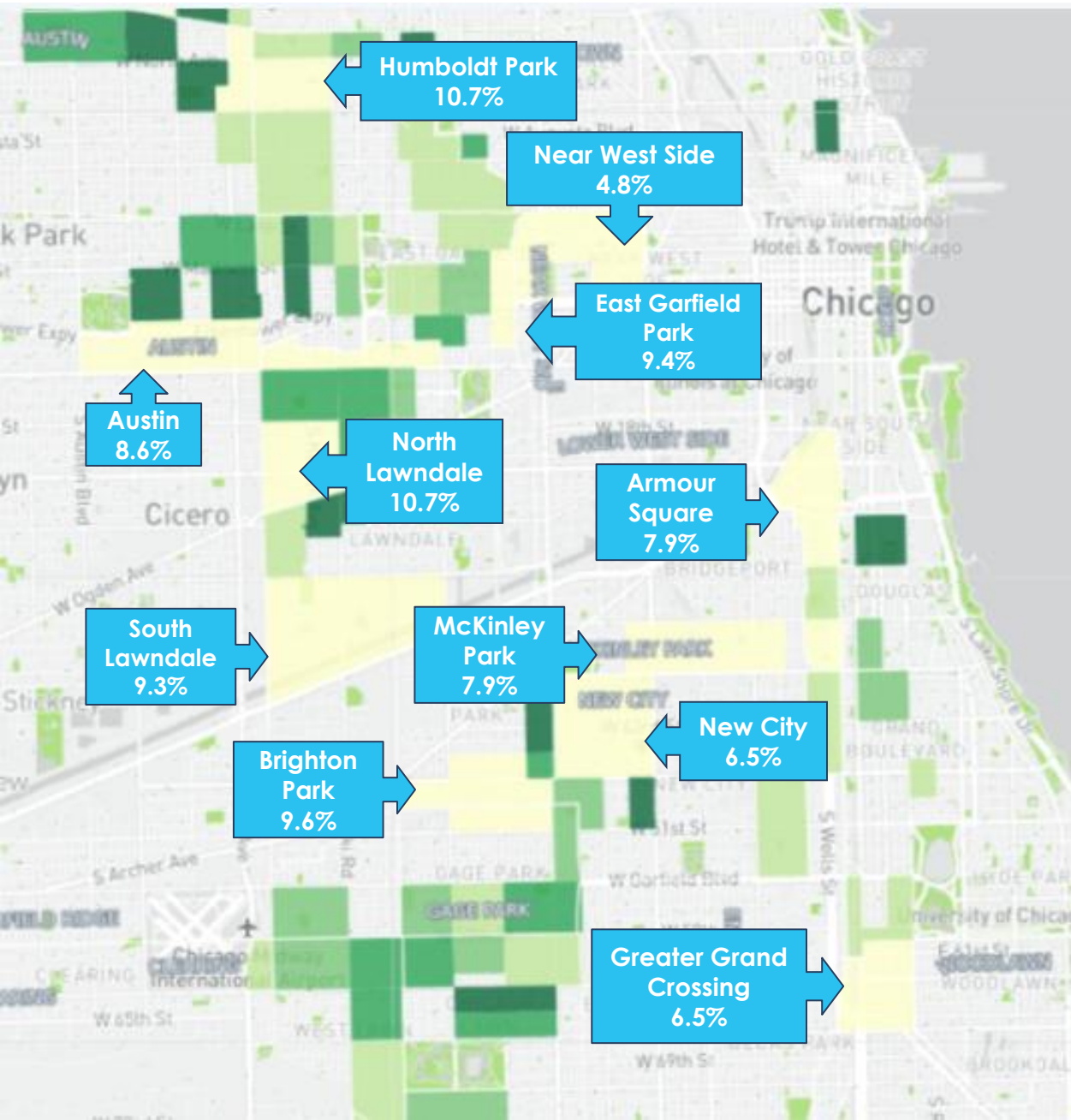
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

## Community Tree Equity



# Tree Canopy Coverage by Neighborhood

(citywide average is 16%)



# Community Tree Equity

Highest social vulnerability

+

Worst flooding susceptibility

+

Most severe economic hardship

+

Highest traffic volumes

+

Most age-adjusted asthma cases

+

Highest surface temperatures

+

Lowest tree canopy coverage

=

11 priority communities for equity tree planting and maintenance



**OUR ROOTS**  
CHICAGO



# **Community Tree Equity Working Group**

**American Forests**

**Blacks in Green**

**Bloomberg Associates**

**Chicago Department of  
Public Health**

**Chicago Department of Streets and  
Sanitation Bureau of Forestry**

**Chicago Department of  
Transportation**

**City of Chicago Mayor's Office**

**Chicago Park District**

**Chicago Sustainability Office**

**Chicago Muslims Green Team**

**Chicago Region Trees Initiative**

**Chicago Wilderness**

**Coalition for a Better Chinese**

**American Community**

**Equitable Resilience &**

**Sustainability, LLC**

**Galewood Neighbors, Inc.**

**I Am Able Center**

**Illinois Environmental Council**

**Imani Village**

**Latinos Progresando**

**Lincoln Park Zoo**

**LUCHA**

**Metropolitan Water Reclamation  
District of Greater Chicago**

**Mi Villita Neighbors**

**Nordson Green Earth Foundation**

**North Lawndale Greening**

**Committee**

**North Lawndale Community**

**Coordinating Council's Greening**

**Open Space Water Soil and**

**Sustainability (NLCCC/GROWSS)**

**Openlands**

**Rush University Medical Center**

**Sacred Roots**

**Save Your Ash**

**St. Agatha's Church**

**Stone Temple Missionary Baptist  
Church**

**The Climate Reality Project Chicago  
Metro Chapter**

**The Nature Conservancy**

**The Nature, Culture, and Human  
Health**

**The Partnership for Healthy Cities**

**The Southwest Collective**

**The Student Conservation  
Association**

**The Trust for Public Land**

**University of Illinois Chicago**

**US Forest Service**

**Walder Foundation**

**West Chesterfield Community  
Association**

**Young Men's Network Association**



# Community-Driven Content: Tools & Door Hangers

## MEDIA TOOLS



**LET'S TALK ABOUT TREES!**

Let's get the word straight on the science surrounding about trees and talk about the facts!

**I've heard...**

- Trees break and crack underground pipes.
- Trees are high and can easily be damaged.
- Planting more trees will change our ecosystem.
- Trees are dangerous for homes. They can damage property.

**Let's Talk About It!**

- Trees roots do not break pipes, but rather, broken pipes attract tree roots due to moisture in the pipes.
- It is a misconception that tree roots really go down 2-3 feet!
- There are no scientific studies that prove that tree-lined streets have lower crime rates.
- Trees provide oxygen, improve air quality, help keep soil in place, and absorb water which prevents flooding.
- Trees also absorb carbon and attract a lot of wildlife such as birds that feed on insects like mosquitoes.
- Trees that are not properly maintained may have more risks.
- Trees can protect your home from flooding.
- You can also keep your air conditioning costs by providing shade and lowering air temperatures. Trees can also help reduce the winter heating your heating costs.

Now that you know the facts, find more information on how you can request a free parkway tree by visiting [chicago.gov/OurRoots](http://chicago.gov/OurRoots).

### FAQ One-Sheet:

#### Let's Talk About Trees!

Languages:

English | Arabic | Chinese

Polish | Spanish

Date: 5/4/2022



**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

**PLANT A TREE.** Together we can create a sustainable future.

**Call 3-1-1 to request a free parkway tree in front of your home.\***

*\*restrictions apply*

Social Media:

Plant a tree

Languages:

English | Arabic | Chinese

Polish | Spanish



**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

**Do it for HYDE PARK.** Plant a tree and help our community grow.

**Call 3-1-1 to request a free parkway tree in front of your home.\***

*\*restrictions apply*

Available on the [CHICAGO](#) mobile app.

Social Media:

Do it for (your community)

Find the graphic for your community:

"Do it for..." Social Media Community package (.zip)

Date: 4/28/2022



**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

**Planting trees help our communities grow.**

- Improve air quality
- Increase property value
- Save money on air conditioning
- Reduce flooding
- Improve health and wellbeing

**Call 3-1-1 to request a free parkway tree in front of your home.\***

*\*restrictions apply*

Social Media:

Planting trees help our community grow

Languages:

English | Arabic | Chinese



**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

**It begins with one tree.** Plant a tree, make a positive impact.

**Call 3-1-1 to request a free parkway tree in front of your home.\***

*\*restrictions apply*

Available on the [CHICAGO](#) mobile app.

Social Media:

It begins with one tree

Languages:

English | Arabic | Chinese

Polish | Spanish

Updated: 5/6/2022



**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

**More healthy trees means healthier communities.**

Planting trees improves air quality, provides shade and cool air, and reduces stress.

**Call 3-1-1 to request a free parkway tree in front of your home.\***

*\*restrictions apply*

Social Media:

Our Roots Chicago

Languages:

English | Arabic | Chinese

Polish | Spanish



**LET'S TALK ABOUT TREES!**

Setting the record straight on what I've heard about trees.

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

[chicago.gov/OurRoots](http://chicago.gov/OurRoots)

Social Media:

Let's Talk About Trees!

Languages:

• English

Date: 4/27/2022



**I've heard...** Trees create plumbing issues

**What actually happens...** Tree roots do not break underground pipes, but rather, broken drain pipes can attract tree roots seeking moisture.

Did you know that tree roots only go down 2-3 feet?

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

[chicago.gov/OurRoots](http://chicago.gov/OurRoots)

Social Media:

I've Heard... Trees Create Plumbing Issues

Languages:

• English

Date: 4/27/2022



**I've heard...** Trees increase crime

**Actually...** There are no scientific studies that prove that trees increase crime. Studies actually show that tree lined streets have lower crime rates.

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

[chicago.gov/OurRoots](http://chicago.gov/OurRoots)

Social Media:

I've Heard... Trees Increase Crime

Languages:

• English

Date: 4/27/2022



**I've heard...** Trees are dangerous for homes. They can damage property.

**The facts are...** Trees can lower your air conditioning costs by providing shade and lowering air temperatures. Trees can block cold winds in the winter lowering your heating costs.

Trees that aren't properly maintained may have weaker limbs. The City will trim your parkway tree at no cost to you. Visit [311.chicago.gov](http://311.chicago.gov) to request service.

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

[chicago.gov/OurRoots](http://chicago.gov/OurRoots)

Social Media:

I've Heard... Trees Are Dangerous For Homes

Languages:

• English

Date: 4/27/2022



**I've heard...** Planting more trees will disrupt our natural ecosystem

**The fact is...** Trees provide oxygen, improve air quality, help keep soil in place, and absorb water which prevents flooding. Trees also absorb carbon and attract a lot of wildlife such as birds that feed on insects like mosquitoes.

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

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**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

**It begins with one tree.** Plant a tree, make a positive impact.

**Call 3-1-1 to request a free parkway tree in front of your home.\***

*\*restrictions apply*

Available on the [CHICAGO](#) mobile app.

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

[chicago.gov/OurRoots](http://chicago.gov/OurRoots)

Social Media:

It Begins With One Tree

Languages:

• English

Date: 4/27/2022



**CHICAGO**  
Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

311 Service Request Number: \_\_\_\_\_

A New Tree Is Coming Soon! A tree planting site(s) has been approved in the public parkway in front of your home/business. The complete tree planting service (site prep, planting, mulching, and 2 years of maintenance) is being provided free of charge as part of the city's **Our Roots Chicago** program.

**Our Roots Chicago** has the goal of planting 75,000 parkway trees across Chicago by 2026. More healthy trees means healthier communities. Making these investments today will provide benefits to Chicago's neighborhoods for years to come.

**TREES DO:**

- Improve air quality
- Reduce flooding
- Increase property values
- Provide shade
- Save money on air conditioning
- Lower stress levels

**TREES DO NOT:**

- Break underground pipes: broken drain pipes can attract tree roots seeking moisture
- Increase crime: tree lined streets have lower crime rates!
- Cause danger or damage property (if properly maintained)

For more info on **Our Roots Chicago**, please visit [Chicago.Gov/OurRoots](http://Chicago.Gov/OurRoots)

If you do not want a tree planted, or if you want to request a particular species, please call 311 within 60 days to cancel/modify the service request (number included above).



**DSS**  
Department of Streets and Sanitation

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**



**CHICAGO**  
Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot

**A NEW TREE has been planted for your neighborhood!** Mayor Lightfoot's **Our Roots Chicago** has the goal of planting 75,000 parkway trees across Chicago by 2026. More healthy trees = healthier communities. Making these investments today will provide increasing benefits to Chicago's neighborhoods for years to come.

The DSS Bureau of Forestry has planted a tree on the parkway adjacent to your home. We kindly ask that you water the tree on a weekly basis during the first year of planting. Please allow the hose to trickle for 25-30 minutes on the tree roots to ensure the water can soak deeply into the roots. During dry periods, the tree may need watering every three days. Cost for watering is minimal to the resident (around \$6 per year, \$3 for seniors).

Please do not remove the wood mulch from around the base of the tree. The mulch was placed there to keep the roots cool and moist in the summer, and to protect the tree from cold in the winter.

And like any good neighbor, please look out for the new tree. Protect it from vandalism, lawn mowers, weed whips and vehicles.

For more information on caring for the new tree, please contact the DSS Bureau of Forestry at 312-746-5254.

To learn more about **Our Roots Chicago**, please visit [Chicago.Gov/OurRoots](http://Chicago.Gov/OurRoots).



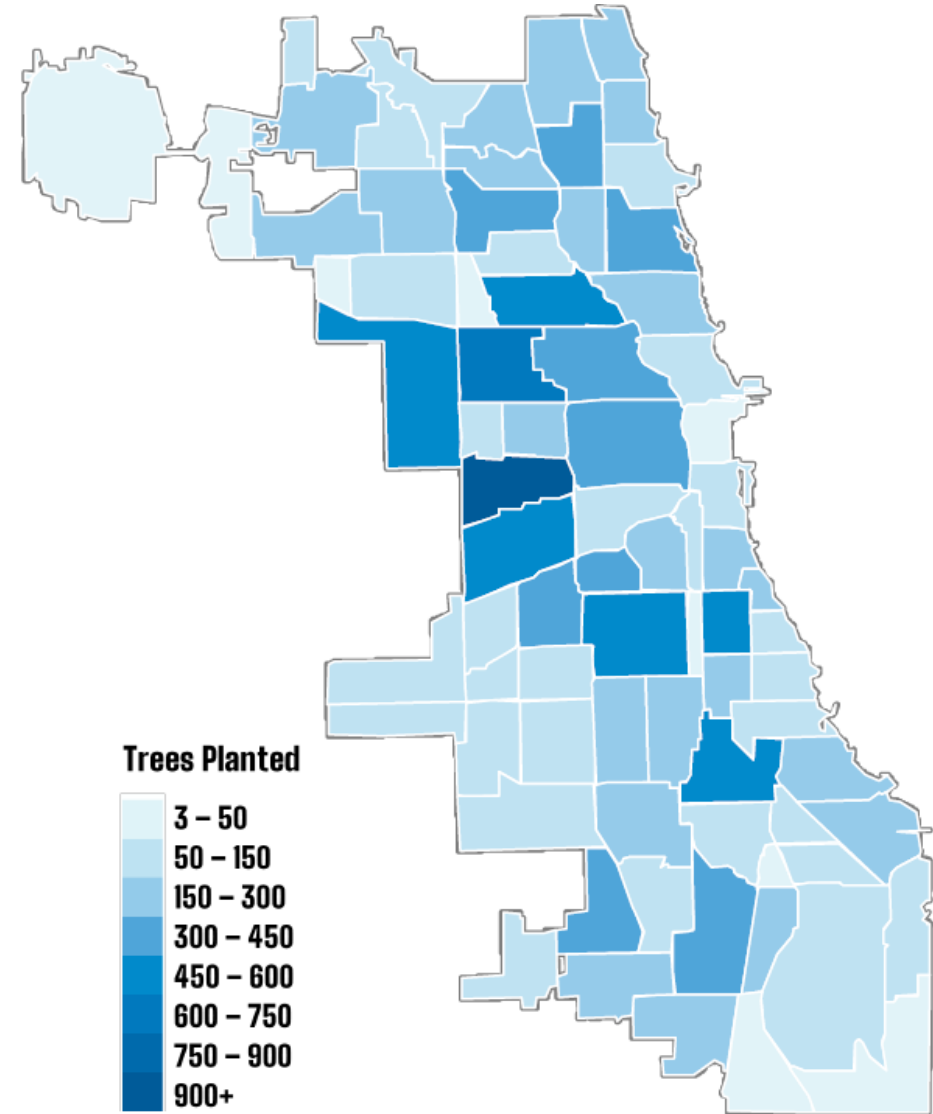
**DSS**  
Department of Streets and Sanitation

**OUR ROOTS CHICAGO**

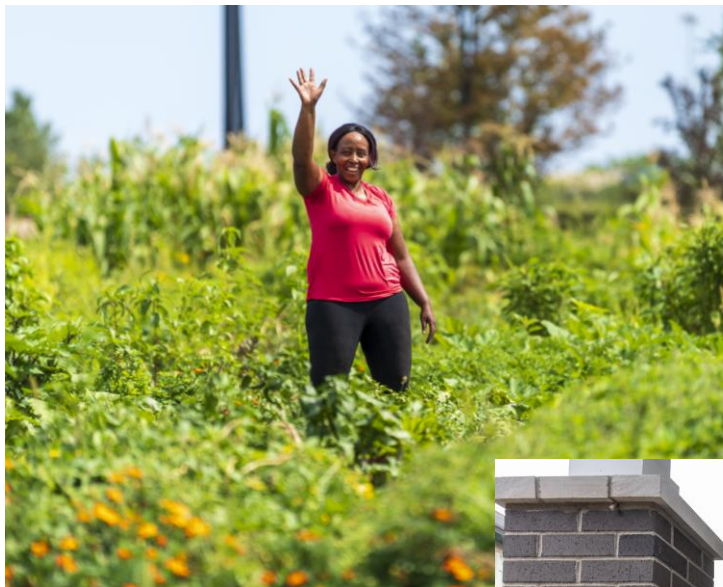
# 2022 Tree Plantings

**Total 18,728 (as of December 3):**

- Efficiencies in Planting Requests
- 33% went to 11 priority communities
- Fulfilled a 3 Year Backlog for Tree Requests
- 2022 Baseline for years to come to prioritize equity areas



Map shows tree plantings on arterial & residential streets in 2022



# Thank You!

Kyra D. Woods

Office of Climate and Environmental Equity

City of Chicago

[Kyra.Woods@cityofchicago.org](mailto:Kyra.Woods@cityofchicago.org)