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COOK COUNTY

Advisory Committee Members



Rita R. Athas

Senior Advisor, World Business Chicago

Rita Athas served as president of World Business Chicago (WBC) from December 2007 through May 2013, and she now serves as a senior advisor on the board of directors. WBC leads Chicago's business retention, attraction, and expansion efforts and raises the city's position as a premier global business destination. Chaired by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and with a board of 63 of the city's top business leaders, WBC fosters private sector growth through the advancement of a business friendly environment that attracts world class talent.

Under Ms. Athas' leadership, WBC was consistently ranked as one of the top economic development organizations in the country and always placed as one of the top three cities for number of new businesses. She oversaw the move of Miller Coors, Ventas, Veolia Environmental, United, Willis, and Coyote Logistics to Chicago to name just a few.

Ms. Athas came to the economic development corporation in 2007 after serving as Mayor Richard M. Daley's deputy chief of staff for external affairs for 10 years. In that capacity she served as Mayor Daley's liaison to regional mayors, The U.S. Conference of Mayors, the business community and foundations.

Ms. Athas was awarded an honorary doctorate from Elmhurst College, and she earned a BA degree from Elmhurst and an MPA from Northern Illinois University.



MarySue Barrett

President, Metropolitan Planning Council

MarySue Barrett is president of the Metropolitan Planning Council, which has been dedicated to shaping a more sustainable and prosperous greater Chicago region since 1934. As an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, MPC serves communities and residents by developing, promoting and implementing solutions for sound regional growth.

Since joining MPC as president and board member in 1996, Barrett has strengthened the Council's relationships with employers and elected officials, helped resolve local development challenges, and spearheaded innovative regional policy solutions.

Prior to joining MPC, Ms. Barrett served in former Mayor Richard M. Daley's first administrations, holding positions of increasing responsibility over seven years. Ms. Barrett began her municipal government work in 1989 in the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and was promoted in 1993 to chief of policy, coordinating initiatives on public safety, economic and community development, and lifelong education.

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Frank H. Beal

Executive Director, Metropolis Strategies

Frank H. Beal is executive director of Metropolis Strategies, formerly Chicago Metropolis 2020. Previously, Beal worked at Inland Steel Industries for two decades, and was President and CEO of Ryerson/West, a subsidiary of Inland Steel. He was director of the Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources and special assistant for energy and environmental affairs for Governor James Thompson. He also served as deputy director of the Institute for Environmental Quality. Beal serves on the board of Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, and was appointed by Mayor Daley to serve on the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning Board.

Mr. Beal also serves on the World Business Chicago Steering Committee, charged with implementing the Mayor's, "Plan for Economic Growth and Jobs". He chairs the WBC's Transportation and Logistic Strategy Team. As a member of the American Planning Association, he has edited and published several books, articles and research reports on urban affairs and land use planning as well as given numerous speeches nationally on those topics. Beal graduated from the University of Illinois with a master's degree in urban planning in 1965. He also received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Antioch College.



Mayor of Palos Hills, Gerald R. Bennett

President of Southwest Conference of Mayors

Mayor Bennett grew up on the Southwest side of Chicago, one of 13 siblings. He attended St. Nicholas of Tolentine Grammar School, Brother Rice High School, Lewis University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

In 1979 the Mayor was first elected to the office of Alderman from the 2nd Ward. In 1981, at the age of 30, Alderman Bennett was elected to Mayor of the City of Palos Hills and is currently serving his ninth term. Besides the part-time/full-time position of Mayor, Jerry is president of Bennett Dental Labs, Inc. located in Palos Hills. He has been in business for 40 years.

Mayor Bennett has devoted many additional volunteer hours by serving as founder and President of the Southwest Conference of Mayors for the last 31 years. He is co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Southwest Central Dispatch (an intergovernmental police and fire 911 service) for the last 28 years. In 2003, Mayor Bennett was elected Chairman of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and continues to serve on the Executive Board Committee. He presently serves as past President of the Illinois Municipal League, and is also on the Board of Directors. He also is the Chairman of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), a regional planning board. In 2008, Mayor Bennett became co-Chairman of the Mayors' Caucus 2016 Olympic Regional Committee.

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Randall S. Blankenhorn

Executive Director of CMAP, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Randy Blankenhorn is executive director of CMAP, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (www.cmap.illinois.gov). Under his leadership, CMAP developed and is now guiding the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. The plan's four themes – Livable Communities, Human Capital, Efficient Governance, and Regional Mobility – address the fundamental challenges that shape residents' daily lives. Randy and CMAP staff work closely with seven counties, 284 municipalities, and scores of stakeholder groups to implement the plan's strategies for aligning public policies and investments, seeking to maximize the benefit of scarce resources as the region adds more than 2 million new residents in the next three decades.

With GO TO 2040's integrated approach to transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality-of-life issues, CMAP is dedicated to strengthening the region's communities and ensuring economic prosperity. In 2013, the American Planning Association selected CMAP as its first-ever recipient of the National Planning Excellence Award for a Planning Agency. Prior to joining CMAP in 2006, Randy was Bureau Chief of Urban Program Planning for the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), coordinating activities of the 14 metropolitan planning organizations across Illinois.



Herman Brewer

Bureau Chief, Cook County Bureau of Economic Development

Herman Brewer was named Bureau Chief for the Cook County Bureau of Economic Development in December 2011, serving first as Director of Capital Planning/Community Development. Prior management experience includes: Executive Vice President, Chicago Urban League (2009 and 2010); Program Director, McArthur Foundation; (2003 through 2008); CEO, Centers for New Horizons, Chicago (2002 and 2003); and Vice President, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (1994 through 2002). He is a graduate of the Illinois Institute of Technology in City and Regional Planning and has done graduate work at Virginia Commonwealth University and the University of Illinois, Chicago. Mr. Brewer resides with his family in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago.

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Mayor Paul Braun, Village of Flossmoor

President, South Suburban Mayors and Manager's Association

Mayor Paul S. Braun has served the Village of Flossmoor as mayor since 2009. Mayor Braun is a 32 year resident of Flossmoor having graduated from Homewood-Flossmoor High School, earning a law degree from the John Marshall Law School, and is actively involved in many civic, charitable, and professional organizations including the Metropolitan Mayors' Caucus, Chicago Metropolitan Agency For Planning, Harold Colbert Jones Community Center, South Suburban Bar Association, and the Family Law Committee Illinois State Bar Association. In addition to his mayoral duties, Mayor Braun is the 2013-2014 President of the South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association.

He is working on legislative affairs affecting the Chicago Southland region through the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association and is working to help bring economic development opportunities to the region through the Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation.



Roberto Escalante, MBA

Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Director of Small Business Transportation Resource Center

Prior to joining the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (non-for-profit Hispanic business advocacy group) as Director of the USDOT's Great Lakes Region Small Business Transportation Resource Center, Mr. Escalante spent over 20 years in corporate management in the areas of new business development, financial planning & analysis, supply chain management, information technology management, marketing, sales & service, and international business with organizations and companies such as the Grainger (multi-billion dollar distribution firm), Perseco /McDonald's (multi-billion dollar packaging and promotions management firm), Scott Foresman & Company (multi-million dollar educational publishing firm), Target Group, Inc. (boutique consulting firm), and Toys 'R' Us (multi-billion dollar specialty retailing firm).

Mr. Escalante has been featured in Hoy newspaper and is a contributing columnist with Negocios Now. Named one of Diversity MBA Magazine's 2009 Top 100 Under 50 Executive and Emerging Leaders.

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Village President Sandy Frum

Village President, Northbrook
President, Northwest Municipal Conference

Sandra (Sandy) Frum is President of the Village of Northbrook. First elected in 2009, she is currently serving her second term. A resident of the town for nearly 40 years, she previously served as a Village Trustee for 22 years. Ms. Frum is presently President of the Northwest Municipal Conference, a council of 42 municipalities and 1 township, comprised of communities in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, and McHenry Counties. She also serves as its representative to the Council of Mayors Executive Committee, whose mission is to identify and address local improvements to the region's transportation network. In addition, she is Co-Chair of the Steering Committee formed to implement the Cook County Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Mitigation Plan.



Jacky Grimshaw

Vice President for Policy, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Jacky joined CNT in 1992 and has since developed its capacity to engage in public policy advocacy, transportation research, public participation tool development, GIS mapping, and community economic development. Jacky created and led CNT's transportation and air quality programs for over a decade and led CNT's Transit Future Campaign in the fight for mass transit reform in Northeastern Illinois in the General Assembly and is currently leading a campaign to expand transit in Cook County. Since, 2005, she has led CNT's policy efforts at all levels of government.

Jacky serves on numerous boards, including: Chicago Transit Authority, RTA Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, Smart Growth Network, and the National Academy of Sciences' Transportation Research Board's Committees on Public Involvement in Transportation and Environmental Justice. She was appointed to Chicago's Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for his Transition Team. She has participated on several Advisory Committees for Illinois Governor Pat Quinn, including the Economic Recovery Commission, the Illinois Tollway Transition Team, and the Elgin-O'Hare West Bypass Advisory Council.

Jacky has completed the M.A. in Public Policy requirements at Governors State University and holds a B.S. in Biology from Marquette University in Milwaukee.

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Teresa Mintle

President and CEO of Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

Theresa Mintle is the fifth President and Chief Executive Officer of the 110 year-old Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. As head of the Chamber, Theresa reports to Board Chairman Scott Swanson, an Executive Committee, and a diverse Board representing every economic sector of the Chicago region. Together, they set the vision and programs for making Chicagoland the most business-friendly region in America.

Prior to joining the Chamber, Theresa spent 25 years in public service working at the federal, state and local levels of government. Theresa’s experience in government includes leading several infrastructure projects, driving pension reform, and implementing modernization initiatives. Most recently, she served as the Chief of Staff to Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of the City of Chicago. As Mayor Emanuel’s first Chief of Staff she set up the Emanuel Administration, joining his team just prior to his inauguration on May 16, 2011. In this role, Theresa drove modernization of internal business systems; advocated for investment in infrastructure; reformed personnel policies, and coordinated several key initiatives.

Theresa is a member of The Economic Club of Chicago, the President’s Circle of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and a director of the World Business Chicago Steering Committee.



Rosa Y. Ortiz, AICP, LEED AP

Program Officer, Enterprise Community Partners

Ms. Ortiz is a certified planner and a LEED accredited professional. She provides over twelve years of government, corporate and not-for-profit experience and over fifteen years of community leadership.

Her skills in urban planning, architecture, and real estate development are coupled with the valuable knowledge of implementation of projects in communities throughout the Chicago Metropolitan area. Her areas of expertise include: sustainable initiatives, equitable transit oriented developments and multi-cultural community engagement.

Ms. Ortiz currently serves as a program officer for Enterprise Community Partners where she oversees and supports energy efficient initiatives and community development projects throughout the region.

Rosa earned a bachelor’s degree in Architecture and a master’s degree in Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

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Jorge Ramirez

President of Chicago Federation of Labor

Jorge Ramirez was elected President of the Chicago Federation of Labor in 2010. He previously served as Secretary-Treasurer. Prior to joining the CFL in 2006, Ramirez was elected Vice President and served as Executive Director of Local 1546 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, representing nearly 30,000 members in Chicago and throughout Illinois.

Since 2008, Ramirez has served on the Cook County Health and Hospitals System Board of Directors as Vice-Chairman. In 2012, he was named to the Chicago Infrastructure Trust board and the Cook County President's Council of Economic Advisors. He currently serves on the boards of the U.S. Department of Labor, the Illinois Department of Labor, the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, Choose Chicago, Navy Pier, Inc. and the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership.

Ramirez received a law degree from the Chicago-Kent College of Law and graduated as a student scholarship athlete from the University of Texas at El Paso in 1993 with a double major in marketing and computer information systems and a four-year letterman in football.



Deborah M. Sawyer

President & CEO, Environmental Design International Inc.

Deborah M. Sawyer founded EDI in 1991 and is the firm's President and CEO. She began her career as an Environmental Scientist for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. Later, she entered the private sector where she rose up the ranks to senior vice president of an engineering consulting firm, before leaving to start her own company. In the transportation sector, EDI has extensive experience providing professional services for Cook County Department of Transportation and Highways, City of Chicago Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Illinois Tollway. EDI is also well versed on projects involving rail, transit, and aviation, with significant roles on projects for the Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE) Program; Metra and the Chicago Transit Authority; and the O'Hare Modernization Program.

Ms. Sawyer holds a Masters of Science in Biology from Eastern New Mexico University and a Bachelors of Science in Political Science from Emory University.

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Mayor Ronald M. Serpico, Village of Melrose Park

Member, West Central Municipal Conference

Ronald M. Serpico's family has lived in the Village of Melrose Park for nearly 100 years. Mayor Serpico is a graduate of Illinois State University and earned a law degree at DePaul. He operates a successful law firm in Melrose Park and has extensive legal experience in local government having served as a village prosecutor, a park district attorney, and as a library board attorney.

Mayor Serpico also serves in leadership roles at the local government level where he has served as Melrose Park Mayor since 1997, as a past President of the Proviso Municipal League and is the Chairman of the West Suburban Preservation Agency. Mayor Ron Serpico understands investing in a modern transportation system is important if Cook County is to remain a viable player in an ever-changing fast moving global economy.



Captain Mark P. Stevenson

Mark Stevenson has 34 years of maritime experience and is a 100 Ton United States Coast Guard Master of Vessels. Mark has served as the host of "From the Wheel House", a CanTv Chicago broadcast, and appeared as a Maritime geography expert on the History Channel's "How the States Were Shaped" series. He currently is a member of the Chicago City Colleges Transportation Distribution & Logistics initiative.

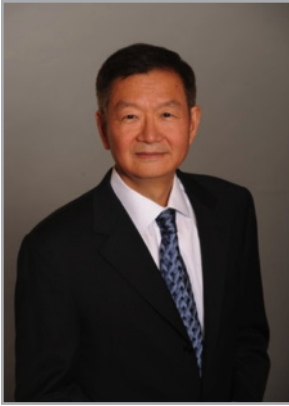
Mark is the founder of the Chicago Harbor Safety Committee and trainer for the Great Lakes Captains Association. He has served as the Grand Warden, President, and Chaplin for the International Ship Masters Association and is an experienced passenger tour boat captain, emergency towboat captain, water taxi captain, sailboat and power boat delivery captain, and scientific collections captain. He has served as a technology consultant for legal and medical facilities and has published "Technology for Small Business."

Mark graduated from Chicago State University with a degree in Biology and attended the University of Wisconsin Madison studying Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology.

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Michael Tang

Chief Executive Officer, National Material L.P.

Michael Tang is Chief Executive Officer, National Material L.P. (NMLP) and Vice-Chairman, Tang Industries (TII); TII and NMLP are holding companies, which are, involved in various businesses such as steel, aluminum, automotive, aerospace, pharmaceuticals and wind energy. The company's 30 operating facilities are located in the United States, Mexico and China. In addition, the company and Mr. Tang have substantial experience in investments in Europe and China. Mr. Tang's experience with TII and NMLP include operations, mergers and acquisitions and start-ups of numerous companies. Prior to joining TII, Mr. Tang practiced law in a private firm in Phoenix, Arizona and for the Navajo Tribe.

In addition, Mr. Tang serves on a variety of local and national civic and philanthropic boards.

Mr. Tang received a BA in economics from the College of William and Mary, in Virginia and a JD from Georgetown University Law Center, in Washington, D.C. He is a member of the State Bar of Arizona, Illinois and Michigan.



Andrea L. Zopp

President and CEO, Chicago Urban League

Andrea Zopp, is President and CEO of the Chicago Urban League and a member of the Chicago Board of Education. Established in 1916, the Chicago Urban League supports and advocates for economic, educational and social progress for African Americans.

Before her appointment to the Chicago Urban League, Zopp was executive vice president and general counsel at Exelon Corporation, where she also served as executive vice president and chief human resources officer.

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