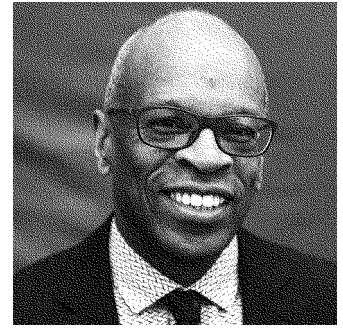


OPENING KEYNOTE: REGENERATIVE CITIES— THE HEART & SOUL OF RESTORATION OF URBAN LIFE



Keynote Summary by Alexis Arias Betancourt

In his opening keynote presentation, Maurice D. Cox, the Chicago Department of Planning and Development commissioner, discussed regenerative design approaches and the need to address the problem of regenerative cities through a hierarchical framework that incorporates multiple scales.

Commissioner Cox provided examples of a landscape urbanism initiative in Detroit that sought to create a green archipelago within the larger city. The project employed landscape architects to define the shape and form of the city, and each architect was given a quarter-mile block to re-weave a fabric independent of new structures. He presented examples of typologies utilized in the Campau/Banglatown project, such as linear landscape stormwater gardens, tree nurseries, and green quilts. An important note in their presentation was about the riverfront landscape in Detroit, which aimed to establish an ecologically sustainable riverfront. In addition, they mentioned installing a light rail system along Woodward Avenue and how it enabled the Brush Park area to be reimaged as a mixed-density community. Commissioner Cox also discussed the success of a project in Detroit that aimed to create a neighborhood where houses costing \$800,000 and \$150,000 could coexist on the same block. The project included a greenway running through the middle of the block and a graphic form-based design that permits the neighborhood to change and evolve. The initiative's success prompted the city council to adopt the form-based code citywide.

Keynote Speaker

Maurice D. Cox
*Commissioner of the Department of
Planning and Development, City of Chicago*

Maurice D. Cox was appointed Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and confirmed by the City Council on October 16, 2019.

Celebrated for his experience merging architecture, design, and politics through multiple public, private, and elected positions, Cox is responsible for leading DPD's economic development, planning, and zoning functions while fostering community-improvement initiatives throughout the city. His primary focus is under-invested neighborhoods on the South and West sides. In his previous capacity as director of planning and development for the City of Detroit, Cox created a new resident-centered planning and development department and led innovative urban planning and revitalization strategies that championed the equitable redevelopment of neighborhoods that fostered population growth and new mixed-use, mixed-income investment.

He also served as mayor of Charlottesville, Virginia, from 2002 to 2004, following six years as a City Councilor. As an elected official, Cox implemented numerous community visioning processes and strategic planning initiatives that resulted in Charlottesville's consistently high ranking as one of the most livable cities in the United States. Cox is a former professor at Syracuse University, the University of Virginia, and Harvard University's Graduate School of Design; a former associate dean for community engagement at Tulane University; and former director of the Tulane City Center in New Orleans. A native of Brooklyn, he has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from The Cooper Union in New York City and an honorary doctorate degree from the University of Detroit Mercy.



Above: Commissioner Cox at the podium during his opening keynote speech for the symposium in S.R. Crown Hall. Photo courtesy of Michelangelo Sabatino.

Below: Audience comprised of symposium attendees, professors, and students of the College of Architecture, IIT, listening to the opening keynote. Photo courtesy of Michelangelo Sabatino.

The current issues in Chicago were the main focus of the keynote, particularly the need to provide affordable accommodation for the 5,000 Google employees who will relocate to the Thompson Center in downtown Chicago. Commissioner Cox discussed repurposing commercial buildings into mixed-income, mixed-use properties and developing 15-minute neighborhoods where amenities are within walking distance. They also discussed the INVEST South/West strategy, which entails pooling \$750 million to invest in 10 neighborhood areas in the South and West parts of Chicago with abundant assets to leverage private investment.

The speaker also talked about a regenerative strategy for Chicago that focuses on diverse joint venture partnerships between black and brown developers and majority developers. The strategy incorporates affordable block types with a component of public space. In just over three years, they highlighted a \$2.2 billion investment, of which \$1 billion was public, and \$1.2 billion was private. The strategy consists of four components: the full-block strategy, the corner strategy, the district strategy, and the public space strategy.

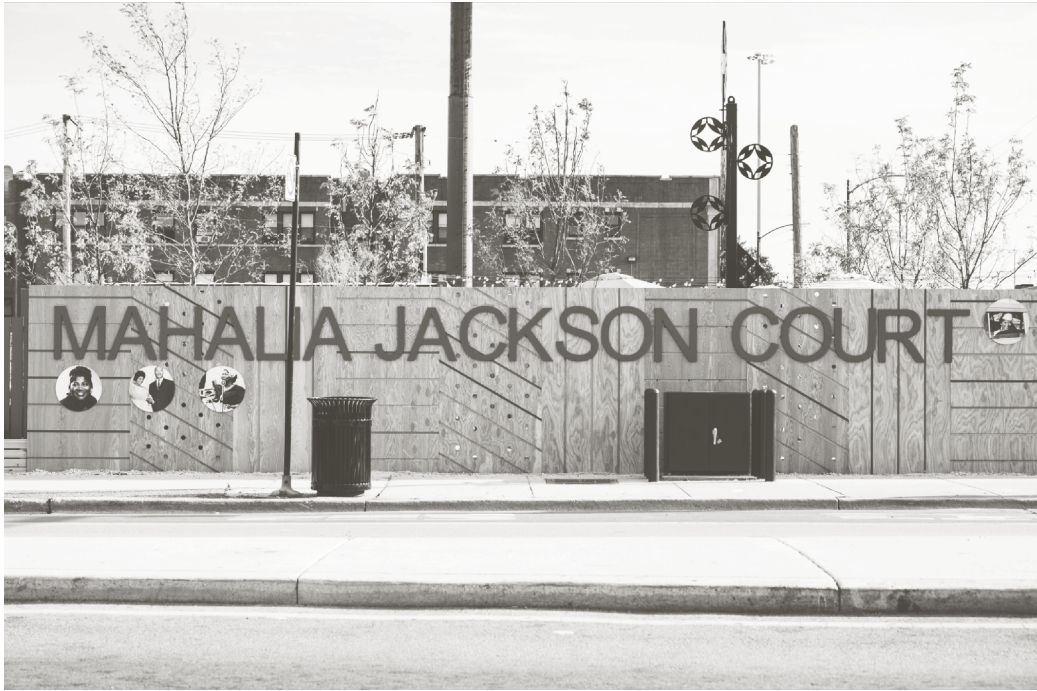


Commissioner Cox highlighted the Mahalia Jackson project, a community initiative to honor the great Mahalia Jackson and foster a sense of belonging for children and families. They emphasized the significance of community participation in the initiative and its effect on the West Garfield Park neighborhood. During the lecture, they also discussed plans to reimagine the entire streetscape in Austin, a west-side Chicago neighborhood, and activate residential streets and vacant lots through the come home initiative, which aims to reverse decades of disinvestment and depopulation and transform the urban fabric of Chicago's South and West Side neighborhoods.

In conclusion, Commissioner Cox discussed approaches to regenerative design and successful initiatives in Detroit and Chicago. The concentration was on the development of mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhoods, the design of public spaces, and the formation of diverse joint venture partnerships. The speech emphasized the significance of community engagement, creating 15-minute neighborhoods, and using graphic form-based codes to permit neighborhoods to evolve and change over time.



Master plan for Campau Davison
Banglatown Project in Detroit,
Michigan. Image courtesy of
Interboro.



The Mahalia Jackson Court in Chatham on Sept. 2, 2022. Photo courtesy of Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago.

The Mahalia Jackson Court in Chatham on Sept. 2, 2022. Photo courtesy of Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago.

