

MARYSUE BARRETT

President | Public & Private Partnership Leader | Policy Changemaker | DEI Champion

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Results-driven, high-energy strategist who leverages civic experience and policy acumen to drive social and economic advancement through ethical decision-making and objective leadership.

Successful track record delivering innovative solutions to systemic, complex problems spanning water infrastructure, transportation, affordable housing, tax policy, social equity, and environmental sustainability.

PROFESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

EXECUTIVE & CIVIC LEADERSHIP

- **Led the transformation of an independent, 87-year-old civic organization, the Metropolitan Planning Council of Chicago, into a widely respected national policy change agent** via cutting-edge research, proven partnerships, and effective advocacy
- **Redesigned problem-solving from the top-down and bottom-up**, applying a *whatever-it-takes* mentality utilizing grit, resiliency, and creativity to lead cross-functional, cross-organizational teams to deliver right-sized solutions
- **Executed successful policies and program turnarounds** by developing and employing cost-effective, sustainable, and equitable solutions to long-standing metropolitan challenges, earning local and national recognition
- **Developed and enacted a multi-medium communications strategy** to share and support solutions that are economically feasible and culturally attuned to support diverse, multi-generational communities

CULTURAL & ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

- **Cultural Transformation.** Brokered systematic action through data-driven storytelling and relatable narratives for media, community leaders, and influencers. Skillfully illuminated local and personal impacts to fuel the case for change
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Leader.** Increased employee and community engagement as a champion for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across internal and external initiatives, events, and policies
- **Strategic Partnerships.** Spearheaded the creation of mutually beneficial public-private partnership models to expand capacity and anchor implementation

CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Brookings Metro, Nonresident Senior Fellow

Current Water (a catalyst to solve pressing water challenges), Board Member

Edgar Fellows (bipartisan leadership program), Advisory Board

IFF (a Midwest Community Development Finance Institution), former Board Member

FELLOWSHIPS

Bloomberg Philanthropies CityLab, 2022

Rockefeller Foundation, 2009

British American Project, 2003

Aspen Institute, 2001

Chicago Council on Global Affairs, 1997

International Women's Forum, 1996

American Council on Germany, 1996

Leadership Greater Chicago, 1994

EXPERTISE

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

P&L, Budgeting & Forecasting

Strategic Planning & Execution

Organizational Transformation

CIVIC & SOCIAL POLICY

Policy Advocacy

Research & Evaluation

Due Diligence, Analysis & Insight

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strategic Partnerships

Storytelling & Communications

Influencer Identification

INNOVATION

Cross-Industry Initiatives

Team Building

Replication & Advocacy

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

MSB POLICY CONSULTING, LLC

2022–Present

Provide strategic advice and counsel to local, national, and international purpose-driven organizations. Help clients assess strengths and gaps, clarify goals, sharpen tactics, communicate consistently, and deepen diverse partnerships.

Primary clients include:

- **BROOKINGS INSTITUTION** | *Nonresident Senior Fellow*
Interviewed top city, regional, and state public officials about opportunities and barriers faced in implementation of the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Synthesized findings and shaped strategy recommendations consistent with the Brookings “Metro@25” blueprint.
- **NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL (NRDC)** | *Senior Strategy Advisor*
Assist Transportation, Water, Communications, and Campaign teams in mapping and implementing equitable infrastructure investment priorities in seven target states. Advise NRDC’s Chief Climate Strategist, senior staff, and consultants on research, advocacy, and partnership tactics to maximize impact of historic federal resources.
- **WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP CENTER** | *Senior Strategy Advisor*
Conduct program research on similar centers in the U.S. and internationally where leaders come together to learn, innovate, challenge old models, and create new possibilities. Plan potential pathways for programming for women leaders within five pillars: public and private enterprise; global supply chain; engineering and technology; infrastructure and design; and space and astrophysics. Explore business and partnership structures for new Center to be built on the shores of Lake Geneva, WI.
- **RW VENTURES** | *Senior Advisor*
Provide project oversight and business development expertise to a team of economic development experts specializing in market-based inclusive growth.
- **SPARCC** | *Consultant*
(Strong, Prosperous, And Resilient Communities Challenge, a national funder collaborative)
Gathered insights from partners across the U.S. on lessons from the American Rescue Plan that can be applied to future investments. Wrote and edited 11-page guide, released in Fall 2022.
- **PRITZKER TRAUBERT FOUNDATION** | *Advisor*
Coached six nominee teams for the Chicago Prize 2022 on strategies to access federal funds.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

METROPOLITAN PLANNING COUNCIL OF CHICAGO (MPC)

1996–2021

An independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves communities and residents by developing, promoting, and implementing solutions for sound regional growth.

PRESIDENT

- Delivered 4X revenue growth, diversified the income base, and raised \$4.5M+ in FY 2021
- Stewarded dozens of trust-based relationships with foundations, corporations, and individuals; leveraged a \$4M institutional grant (MacArthur Foundation) to raise \$5M more, creating organization’s first endowment, now a \$16M investment portfolio
- Partnered closely with a 60-member Board of Governors, five operating committees, and five program committees, incorporating diverse perspectives to forge positions, take risks, and evolve strategic priorities
- Increased diversity and inclusion across the organization; deepened racial diversity by 30% at the staff level, achieved 48% representation of people of color at the management level; increased female representation at the Board level by 45%

- Inspired bold ideas, bringing diverse voices together to solve complex challenges facing urban areas; enacted pioneering programs and policies, including employer-assisted housing, planning blueprints, Great Rivers Chicago, the Cost of Segregation, and the #BustedCommute social media campaign
- Identified and promoted solutions to inter-related, multi-faceted community problems by researching, developing, and publicizing fiscally responsible and sustainable policies to tackle social, economic, and educational obstacles
- Recognized as a persuasive communicator who fosters coordinated action; experienced media spokesperson; engaging keynote speaker and writer of opinion pieces
- Recruited and developed entrepreneurial employees who reflect metro Chicago's diversity; grew staff from 10 to 30 full-time employees plus fellows and consultants; mentored staff, many of whom have advanced to pivotal external leadership roles
- Fostered trust-based community alliances to attract multi-sector, multi-racial audiences of 1,600+ individuals to organizational events

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR – CITY OF CHICAGO

1989–1996

The office was held by Richard M. Daley, 54th Mayor of Chicago, who served from 1989 to 2011.

CHIEF OF POLICY ('93-'96) | DEP DIRECTOR, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS ('91-'93) | ASST TO THE MAYOR ('89-'91)

- Served as a senior advisor, spearheading community economic development, public safety, and education policy
- Coordinated innovation teams spanning 40 departments and seven city agencies; built alliances with external partners in academia and foundations
- Planned and executed Chicago's successful bid to host the 1996 Democratic National Convention
- Guided 1995 governance and operational overhaul of Chicago Public Schools
- Coordinated development of City of Chicago's legislative agenda, supervising staff and consultants at state and local levels
- Liaison to Mayor's Washington, D.C. office to enact a bipartisan federal agenda
- Shepherded hundreds of early mayoral appointments to board and commissions and legislative reforms, including creation of the Office of Inspector General
- Initiated national best practices forum with U.S. Conference of Mayors

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Chicago ROAR , Regional Organizing for Antiracism Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training	2019–2020
Harvard Business School , Boston, MA Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management Seminar	2006
Northwestern University , Evanston, IL Bachelor of Science, Communications	1986

AFFILIATIONS & RECOGNITION

One Million Degrees , Coach	2020–Present
The Night Ministry , Volunteer	2018–Present
Commercial Club of Chicago	2017–Present
University of Chicago Harris School Leadership , Guest Lecturer – Chicago Seminars	2010–Present
Leadership Greater Chicago , Class of 1994 Fellow & Former Board Member	1993–Present
The Chicago Network , Member, Nonprofit Subcommittee, Former Board Member	1996–Present
Economic Club of Chicago	1995–Present
Crain's Chicago Business 40 Under 40 , Recipient	1994

APPEARANCES, WRITING, AND SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Getting to Equitable Transformation SPARCC investment guide	2022
“A Bigger Bang for the Infrastructure Buck,” Author Governing	2022
Metropolitan Planning Council’s Virtual Annual Event “Better Together” Video	2021
“Modernizing Illinois’ Transportation Infrastructure,” Crain’s Chicago Business Transportation Event	2021
“Investment in City Infrastructure is an Investment in America’s Future,” Co-author The Hill	2021
Reflecting on MPC’s Accomplishments Amidst a Tough Year MPC	2020
“What We Do Writes the Future Chicago Needs,” Author Crain’s Chicago Business	2020
Equity in Action: How the Univ. of Chicago Became a Trailblazer on Diversity in Professional Svcs MPC Blog	2020
Preserving Affordability Together: Blueprint for Community Action (E. Garfield Park) MPC	2020
“Connected to Chicago” Needed Revenues and Reforms, Interview with Bill Cameron WLS Radio	2019
“The Next Drivers of Prosperity” Panel with John Rogers Aspen Institute’s Latinos & Society Program	2018
What Does Illinois Face When It Comes to the Federal Infrastructure Plan, WGN Radio: The Download	2018
“Chicago’s Success Must Be Bigger Than the Downtown Boom,” Co-author Crain’s Chicago Business	2018
Economic Inequality, Interview with Craig Dellimore WBBM News Radio: At Issue	2018
“After 20 Years, Three Regions Confront Their Divisions,” Co-author Living Cities Blog	2018
Transit Means Business Research and Case Studies Metropolitan Planning Council E-Booklet	2018
Cost of Segregation Research Report Metropolitan Planning Council and Urban Institute	2017
Leading Change: 7 Tips from 2 Decades of Civic and Personal Reinvention, Author MPC	2016
Our Great Rivers Vision for 2040 Metropolitan Planning Council	2016
How Can Government Efficiency Be Improved, Interview with Justin Kaufman WGN Radio: The Download	2016
“Dear Chicagoans of 2050” Meeting of the Minds Blog	2015
Civic Chat, Cable Interview Microsoft Chat Series	2015
Great Rivers Chicago: What Chicagoans Want for their Rivers Youth Video Production	2015
International Meeting of the Minds Keynote Speaker – Toronto “Meeting of the Minds” Conference	2013
Commitment to “Building Public-Private Partnerships for Redevelopment” Clinton Global Initiative	2012
The Just City: Breaking Down the Barriers, Panelist Ford Foundation’s Anniversary Program	2011