

ICSC GOVERNMENT RELATIONS CHAIR SPOTLIGHT



Bob Koys

Bob Koys has served as the ICSC GR Chair for Illinois for two years and an ICSC member for 30 years.

Illinois has a very active GR Committee. How do you foster such enthusiasm for government relations?

Jesal Patel and I are the latest chairs in a long line of chairs leading a group of very passionate Illinois real estate professionals who understand the importance of a productive public-private partnership. Our members constantly have their ears to the ground, listening for changing legislation that either helps or hurts our industry. By orchestrating the timely sharing of that information, along with actionable steps when necessary, allows us to drive concrete, tangible results. This action-oriented approach helps foster that enthusiasm for involvement. We're seeing a continued increase in new members and are excited to continue to incorporate new and diverse perspectives.

The IL GR Committee hosts a popular reception for the Aldermen in Chicago every September. What makes the ICSC+ALDERMANIC RECEPTION CHICAGO unique?

One of the primary features of Chicago's representative government is the 50-person aldermanic body that represents the 50 wards of the city. When real estate professionals typically interact with government officials, such as aldermen, they are usually asking for something. Our aldermanic event, held every September for nearly 15 years (thank you to Donna Pugh of Foley Lardner for starting the event), is an informal networking event where the primary goal is not the "ask," but the "connection." Long-term relationships formed at this annual event have led to dozens of beneficial, foundational collaborations that emphasize two-way listening, strategizing and problem-solving. We are excited for this year's event, which will take place on Wednesday, September 18. Please join us if you're in Chicago that day.

What's your favorite hidden gem in Chicago that most people don't know about?

Anyone who has spent time in Chicago knows of the numerous gems springing from our beautiful lake and riverfronts: architectural boat tours, river kayaking and waterfront dining to name a few. The ever-improving lake and river water quality that makes these obvious gems possible is the result of a little-known, hidden gem: an intricate engineering system that deals with the combined sanitary and storm water of the area. Begun in 1975 and ongoing today, the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan (TARP), or Deep Tunnel Project, is a system of 110 miles of 30-foot-diameter tunnels constructed 300 feet below the surface of Chicagoland. These tunnels, paired with commercial limestone quarries, temporarily store the combined storm and sanitary water during large rain events, giving the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District treatment plants needed time to process and clean the water. This hidden-gem infrastructure project has allowed Chicago's water-centric economy to thrive and has well-positioned it for a future when major precipitation events are sure to increase. When completed, TARP will handle 17.5 billion gallons of water. Numerous river advocacy groups like the Friends of the Chicago River, led by Margaret Frisbie, are also championing legislation and infrastructural improvements intended to continue to improve Chicagoland's water quality, and subsequently the area residents' quality of life.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US AT
GPP@ICSC.COM**

