State of the Loop

Q4 2025 (October-December)

Executive Summary: Businesses and Transit Renew Investment in the Loop

The Loop continued to build momentum in Q4, with high-amenity buildings leading the return-to-work trend. Major companies renewed their commitment to downtown, signaling growing confidence in the Loop as a robust business district. Adding to the district's vibrancy, economic investment remained strong as dozens of new restaurants, cafés, and retailers opened or prepared to launch. Seasonal arts and cultural events boosted pedestrian activity and reinfoced the Loop's role as a regional destination for holiday traditions. Finally, transit agencies saw rising ridership alongside the passage of landmark state funding.

Office and Economic Investment

Chicago's Q4 office occupancy rate **averaged 57% of 2019 levels**, consistent with 2024's Q4 occupancy *(Avison Young Technologies, Placer.ai)*. Luxury offices continued to draw approximately 10% more workers than the average, signaling efforts by employers to attract workers back to the office with premium amenities. Additionally, Onni Group, Shamrock Trading, Zurich, and Hireology all signed deals to lease or own office buildings in the Loop. Shamrock, a logistics company, plans to expand its existing suburban office to a downtown space, and Hireology plans to move into the upper floors of the Marshall Field Building. **These moves signal a steady trend toward a return to Loop offices.**

New investment flourished in the Loop in Q4, **totaling over $318 million, with the number of vacant storefronts on State Street decreasing 13.7% from Q3.** This reflects the more than 40 new restaurants, cafés, and retail stores that opened or are set to open soon in the Loop. Additionally, the recent purchases and planned redevelopment of 213-227 S State Street and 401 S State Street into a community center and apartments, respectively, contribute to intentional Loop and State Street investment. Construction also continued on Google's redevelopment of the Thompson Center, which is set to open in early 2027.

New retail and restaurants in the Loop.
Source: Chicago Loop Alliance

> Tenants want to be where talent wants to be. Restaurants and hospitality want to be where people gather. The Loop's ability to pull in that kind of tenant shifts the narrative from what we lost to what we can build."

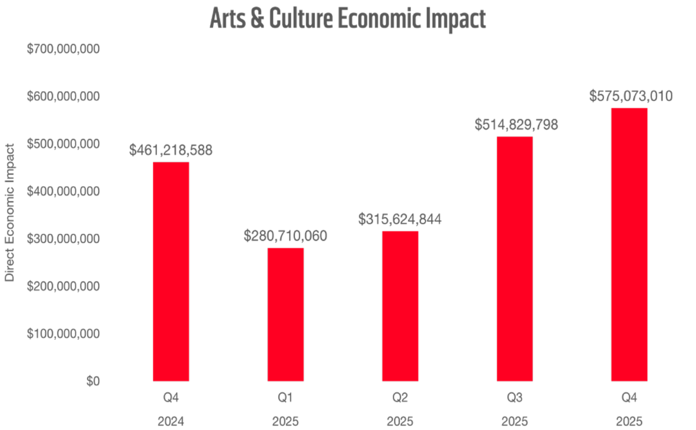
- Victor Sanmiguel, Co-Founder and Chief Deal Officer, Bespoke Commercial Real Estate

Source: LinkedIn

Arts and Culture

Christkindlmarket in Daley Plaza
Source: Chicago Loop Alliance

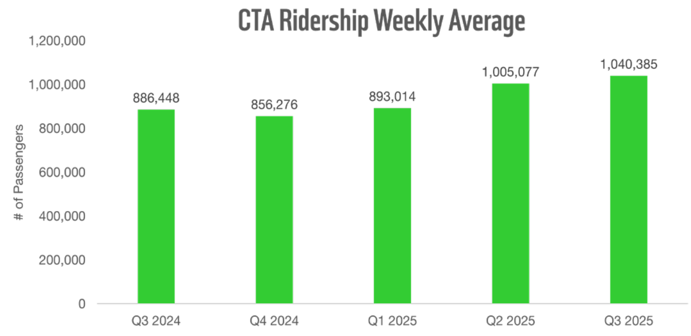
Throughout the fall and winter season, iconic holiday events brought visitors to the Loop to celebrate. In October, events like Sundays on State, Lurking in the Loop, and the Arts in the Dark Parade saw hundreds of thousands of visitors. Performing arts and cultural institutions drew over 1.4 million arts lovers to the Loop in Q4. Christkindlmarket in Daley Plaza saw 500,000 visitors and over 60,000 people tested their skating skills at the Millenium Park Ice Rink. Overall, the Loop's popular seasonal events **attracted 2 million people and generated $575 million in economic impact.**



Sources: Choose Chicago, Christkindlmarket, DCASE, CLA estimates

Transportation

CTA and Metra ridership continued to increase just as Illinois' landmark transit funding and reform bill passed in October. The legislation includes an estimated $1.2 billion in new annual operating funding for Metra, Pace, and CTA, ensuring Chicago and the Loop's crucial transit infrastructure continues to operate at full capacity in 2026. In addition, reforms in the bill will allow the agencies to provide **improvements to service frequency, reliability, and safety in the coming years.**



Source: CTA

Transit's continued popularity among Chicago's residents and visitors is reflected in Q3 ridership. CTA's buses and trains carried a weekday average of over a million passengers, **reaching 80% of pre-pandemic ridership and surpassing Q3 2024 levels by 17%**—October 9 was CTA's biggest ridership day since the pandemic, with 1.17 million rides. Metra saw 10.7 million passengers in Q3, a **14% increase** from the same time in 2024.

Visitors and residents from around the city flocked to the Loop for holiday events, keeping pedestrian activity on State Street at 78% of 2019 levels. While foot traffic is down overall compared to the previous year, weekend activity held steady in Q4, reaching an average of 128,000 pedestrian impressions *(MRI OnLocation)*.