

Chicago: A Legacy Cast in Metal

“The durable panels could be installed on an incline and were available in continuous, joint-free lengths at a cost that aligned with our budget.”

— Nicolas Anderson - Principal & Technical Director, Latent



Roots of Reinvestment: a Name and a Promise

On Chicago's West Side, Forty Acres Fresh Market turns a vacant Salvation Army building into a grocery and community anchor for Austin, a neighborhood without fresh food access for decades. Founded in 2017 by Liz Abunaw, the market grew into a \$5M, 12,000-sf adaptive reuse project developed in partnership with Westside Health Authority.

The name evokes Sherman's Field Order 15, the promise of "40 acres and a mule," a reminder that fresh food is a birthright. With architect Latent, the team cast that legacy into a striking façade, abstracting forty acres into modern metal.

One Skin, Two Buildings

The brief called for bold design on a tight budget. **The team used 2,700 sf of Morin Matrix MX-1 panels in 22-ga Galvalume, set at a 40-degree incline nodding to the Forty Acres logo.** Evergreen, Patina Green, Dove Gray, and Chromium Gray evoke cultivated plots.

Tuschall Engineering installed the panels, adding texture and rhythm to a once-plain exterior. Chamfered windows echo the façade, framing produce displays, while a bold sign marks the corner on Chicago Avenue.

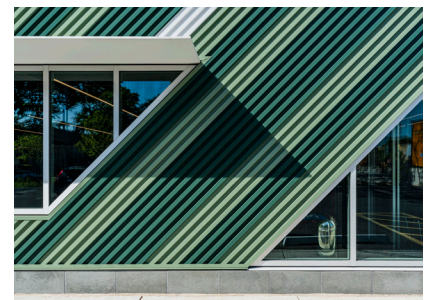
Forty Acres Fresh Market
Chicago, Illinois

Project:	Forty Acres Fresh Market
Location:	Chicago, Illinois
Use:	Grocery & Retail Banking
Architect:	Latent
Contractor:	Milhouse Construction
Product:	Morin Matrix MX-1 Rainscreen, 22-ga Galvalume
Size:	Over 2,700 sq ft

“The depth and profile of the Morin Matrix façade panels introduce subtle color variation without the added expense of custom finishes required for flat panel systems.”

Reusing a century-old bow-truss structure with a 1970s CMU addition brought challenges, but sparked reinvestment. The project received funding from city, state, and federal sources, which helped attract a new tenant, PNC Bank, to the site.

Forty Acres now advances the Austin Quality of Life Plan and Soul City Corridor vision, proving thoughtful design can deliver on a decades-old promise of fresh food access.



Photography: Konrad Wazny

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