WE WILL CHICAGO

A framework plan for the city's future

DRAFT FOR PUBLIC INPUT

Published July 2022

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

"I believe engagement has to be organic; it has to come from the people. I believe it should reflect the generative themes of a community—the things that people are concerned about—but also be a celebration of culture, a sharing of culture."

– *Marvin Garcia* | **Humboldt Park**

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Dear Chicagoans,

I envision Chicago as a place where people, businesses, and communities thrive, and where all residents can live in healthy, safe communities and feel a sense of belonging.

Envisioning is just the first step. In order to make this a reality, Chicago must go further and create a community-driven, data-informed strategy to guide the City's work to these ends.

The We Will Chicago process, which will result in the Chicago's first citywide plan since 1966, is that strategy as it both defines our collective vision for our city and charts out how we make it tangible. As with all work since I became mayor, the We Will process is rooted in racial equity and resiliency. Each goal and objective within this plan is meant to uphold and further those principles.

This forward-looking plan will pave a clear path for us to advance neighborhood growth and vibrancy while addressing social, health and economic inequities. To be able to reimagine our city's future, we must start by reflecting on the past. Throughout the process of creating this plan, we made sure to recognize our city's history of policies, programs, and investments that have both caused and exacerbated racial and social inequality. In order to truly move forward together as a city, we've made historical reckoning and trust building central components to We Will Chicago.

Importantly, I want this plan to be OUR plan—not one crafted only by City staff, but rather a document that reflects a wide range of diverse residents, who we engaged through community meetings, artistic experiences, and the volunteer teams who met monthly to draft this plan. The document before you is the product of unique collaboration, hard work, and consensus-building with residents, artists, organizers, nonprofits, business and philanthropic leaders and City staff. Now, I am eager for your feedback on ways to strengthen this draft plan as we prepare for adoption of the final plan in 2023.

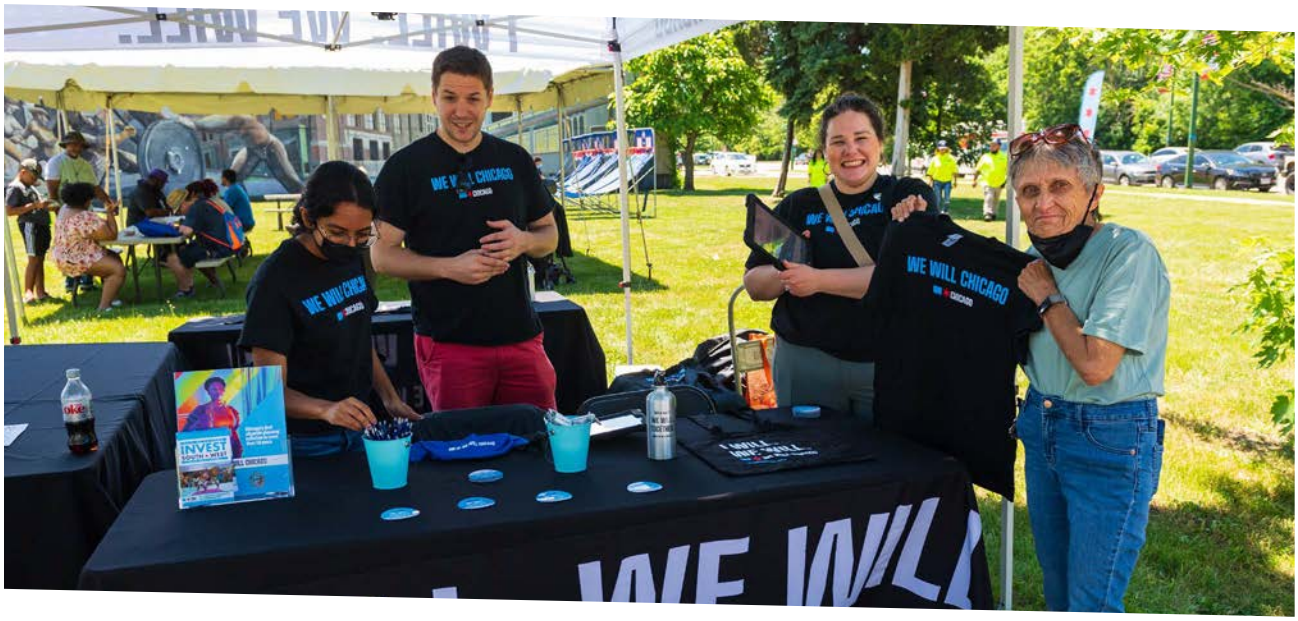
We Will Chicago will be a critical tool that we will use to shape annual budgets, capital projects, and policy priorities. This plan also serves as a key strategy in promoting health equity throughout the city and closing the racial life expectancy gap between neighborhoods. With the strategies and efforts concerted through this plan and ongoing partnerships with community leaders through the implementation process, we will make every neighborhood of our city safer and more vibrant—sanctuaries where everyone can live in peace and prosperity.

To the 115 volunteers, 25 community-based partners, and 103 city staff that worked together to co-create this draft plan, I thank you for your passion and dedication to our city. I look forward to the next phase of even broader community engagement to engage more residents in this historic process and ensure that all voices and perspectives are reflected in this 10 year vision for the future. With We Will Chicago guiding our City, I am more hopeful than ever about our strong, bright future.

Sincerely,

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot

INTRODUCTION



We Will Chicago is a citywide planning process to establish formal goals and objectives to guide Chicago's future for the next decade.

Initiated in summer 2020, the planning process is being led by neighborhood stakeholders, artists, community partners and City agencies based on the basic principles of equity and resiliency for all.

Equity is essential to address Chicago's structural racism, poverty, depopulation and health disparities. Resiliency is essential for individuals and groups to survive, adapt and rebound in the face of chronic stresses and acute shocks like climate change and pandemics.

Citywide plans are tools used by municipalities throughout the world to identify needs, establish goals and create strategies to achieve them. When formally adopted by a government agency or related entity, a citywide plan provides a framework for the consideration of public policies, legislation, financing and projects that serve to implement its objectives.

Chicago has utilized plans for more than a century to guide an evolution that, for some residents and neighborhoods, has made it the nation's most livable big city, with convenient access to high-quality jobs, housing, recreation, healthcare, schools, shopping, culture and entertainment, and transportation amenities. For many other residents and neighborhoods, Chicago is a city in decline, with profound social, racial and economic challenges that have worsened over generations, especially on the South and West sides.

We Will Chicago is the first planning process in the City's history that acknowledges the past as much as the future. Thanks to nearly two years of community-driven input, We Will recognizes that many of Chicago's most pressing needs are due to systemic inequities that have been decades in the making. Some needs are the result of previous plans, policies and market forces that had negative long-term consequences.

Others are the result of what previous plans and policies failed to acknowledge or effectively address on a citywide level.

As of summer 2022, the We Will Chicago planning process consists of a draft framework document with eight focus areas known as planning pillars. Each pillar includes multiple goals and objectives developed by We Will's community partners and volunteers to support the wellbeing of individuals, neighborhoods and the city itself.

The pillars include:

- ARTS & CULTURE
- CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY
- HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS
- LIFELONG LEARNING
- PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY
- TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently in draft form, pillar goals and objectives are presented here for public discussion, comment and questions through the Fall of 2022. Based on public feedback, the goals and objectives will be refined this winter by We Will staff for presentation to the Chicago Plan Commission, which is a public-private review authority that's solely responsible for approving formal City of Chicago plans and other public and private planning projects. In addition to the goals and objectives in this draft plan, over 600 policy ideas developed by research teams can be found online for further feedback and refinement.

Chicago's history has been shaped by hundreds of plans created by neighborhood groups, business associations, civic organizations and City departments that were subsequently implemented through policies, regulations and projects that continue to impact Chicagoans.

The plans that were formally adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission are considered official documents to guide the administration of City government.

In early 2023, We Will is anticipated to be presented to the Chicago Plan Commission. If adopted, it will serve as a framework plan for the creation of an equitable and resilient Chicago for all. We Will's adoption would automatically require aspects of certain government processes to align with its goals. Other forms of implementation would require additional efforts that include new policies, legislation and budgeting that would be subject to community input and formal approval by City Council and other agencies. Future implementation will start with refinement and prioritization of the policy ideas generated by the We Will Chicago process.

We Will's many contributors have diverse backgrounds and life experiences as Chicagoans, and each appreciates how all the city's neighborhoods contribute to a rich urban fabric that is unlike any other in the world. Plan participants are optimistic that it can serve as a framework for a more cohesive city, in which all neighborhoods are ascendant and residents equitably share and contribute to the promise of Chicago.

KEY TERMS

Equity is both an outcome and a process that results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive.

Resiliency helps individuals and groups to survive and adapt to personal stresses and collective change.

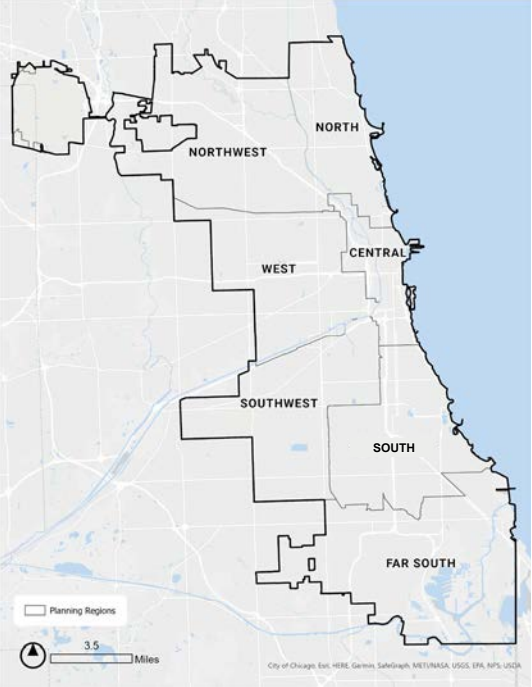
Land Acknowledgment

The City of Chicago is located on land that is and has long been a center for Native peoples. The area is the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe, or the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Nations consider this area their traditional homeland, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo and Mascouten.

The City specifically acknowledges the contributions of Kitihawa of the Potawatomi in fostering the community that has become Chicago. We acknowledge all Native peoples who came before us and who continue to contribute to our city. We are committed to promoting Native cultural heritage.

Adopted by the City of Chicago, November 17th, 2021

MAP OF CHICAGO



ACKNOWLEDGING CHICAGO'S SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES

Historical acknowledgment is the first step of a reckoning process to repair harms perpetrated against specific groups and to prevent them from occurring again.

Chicago's establishment and growth in the late 1700s was rooted in the seizure of land and displacement of Native Americans. More recently, the city's evolution has directly and indirectly impacted generations of racial and ethnic communities, often in negative or burdensome ways and frequently for the benefit of privileged population groups. Harms to Chicagoans were both deliberate and unintentional, often involving the leadership, cooperation or silence of local, state and federal governments.

At the beginning of the We Will planning process, each pillar research team reviewed Chicago's planning history and the relevant City actions that have created, enforced, or allowed ongoing racial and ethnic inequities. The following are systemic harms that have occurred since Chicago's first citywide plan was published in 1909. These snapshots of Chicago history represent lasting legacies of past plans, policies and market forces that We Will's vision for the future is seeking to address.

Though not intended to recount every instance of racial and social oppression in city history, We Will acknowledges that these issues perpetuated a broad pattern of inequity that benefited higher-income white residents and damaged people of other races. These acknowledgments are included to contribute to a larger process of healing and reconciliation among Chicagoans and serve as an outline of some areas the City of Chicago commits to improving.

To provide comments on this historical accounting, please email wewill@cityofchicago.org.

Federal Highway Construction

In the 1940s and '50s, the construction of U.S. Interstates 55, 57, 90, 94 and 290 harmed dozens of densely populated neighborhoods throughout Chicago.

More than 6,000 families and 2,200 single people were displaced to make way for multilane roadways that divided many working-class communities and, in certain instances, separated white neighborhoods from Black ones. Highway construction also hastened the postwar exodus of primarily white families and white-owned businesses to the suburbs, along with jobs, cultural amenities, financial institutions, housing and other amenities that shrank local tax revenues and the City's ability to effectively address the needs of depopulated neighborhoods.

Urban Renewal

In the 1950 and '60s, federally funded urban renewal projects incentivized the City's demolition of designated slums and blighted blocks with plans for modern multifamily homes, institutions and other large facilities.

Urban renewal projects occurred throughout Chicago, but poor and Black neighborhoods were disproportionately targeted, uprooting families and businesses and deepening the city's racial and socioeconomic inequities. By 1966, more than 81,200 Chicagoans were displaced by construction projects intended for middle-class families and individuals.

Public Housing

From the 1950s through the '60s, the City and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) constructed high-rise public housing projects for thousands of low-income Chicagoans and residents displaced by highway construction and urban renewal.

Surrounded by paved plazas that were deliberately detached from the street grid, the buildings suffered from decades of deferred maintenance and obsolescence. When the City and CHA issued the "Plan for Transformation" in 2000 that was meant, in part, to address decades of racial segregation, CHA projects represented more than two thirds of the nation's 15 poorest census tracts. The plan demolished virtually all the former high-rises, displacing yet another generation of mostly Black residents. As of 2017, only 8% of the estimated 17,000 former residents of the demolished buildings had returned home to planned mixed-income replacement communities.

Redlining

Starting in the 1940s and continuing into the '70s, a coordinated effort by local and national financial organizations prohibited the use of federally backed mortgage loans for home purchases in select neighborhoods.

Primarily comprised of Black people and low-income residents, these areas were often represented on maps in red to alert finance professionals that they were believed to represent risky investments for loans guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration. As a result, redlining directly incentivized banks not to approve loans for Black and some Latino applicants, resulting in Black households receiving less than 2% of all federally insured loans at the time, and predominantly white neighborhoods and suburbs receiving preferential access to financing.

Contract Sales

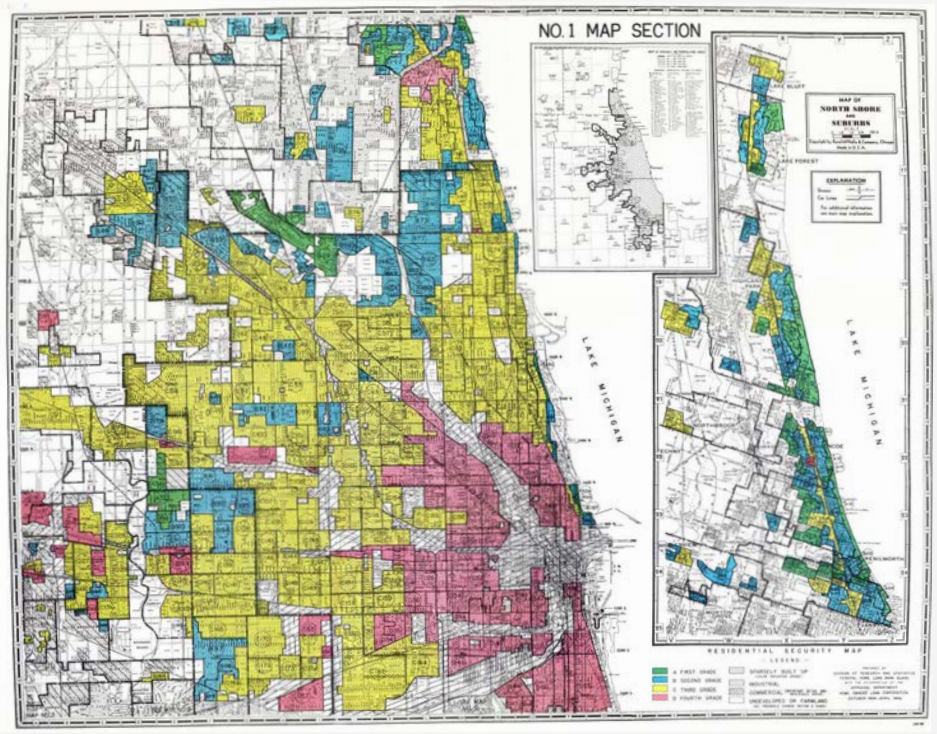
In the 1950s and '60s, predatory housing contracts robbed Black families in Chicago of an estimated $3 to $4 billion.

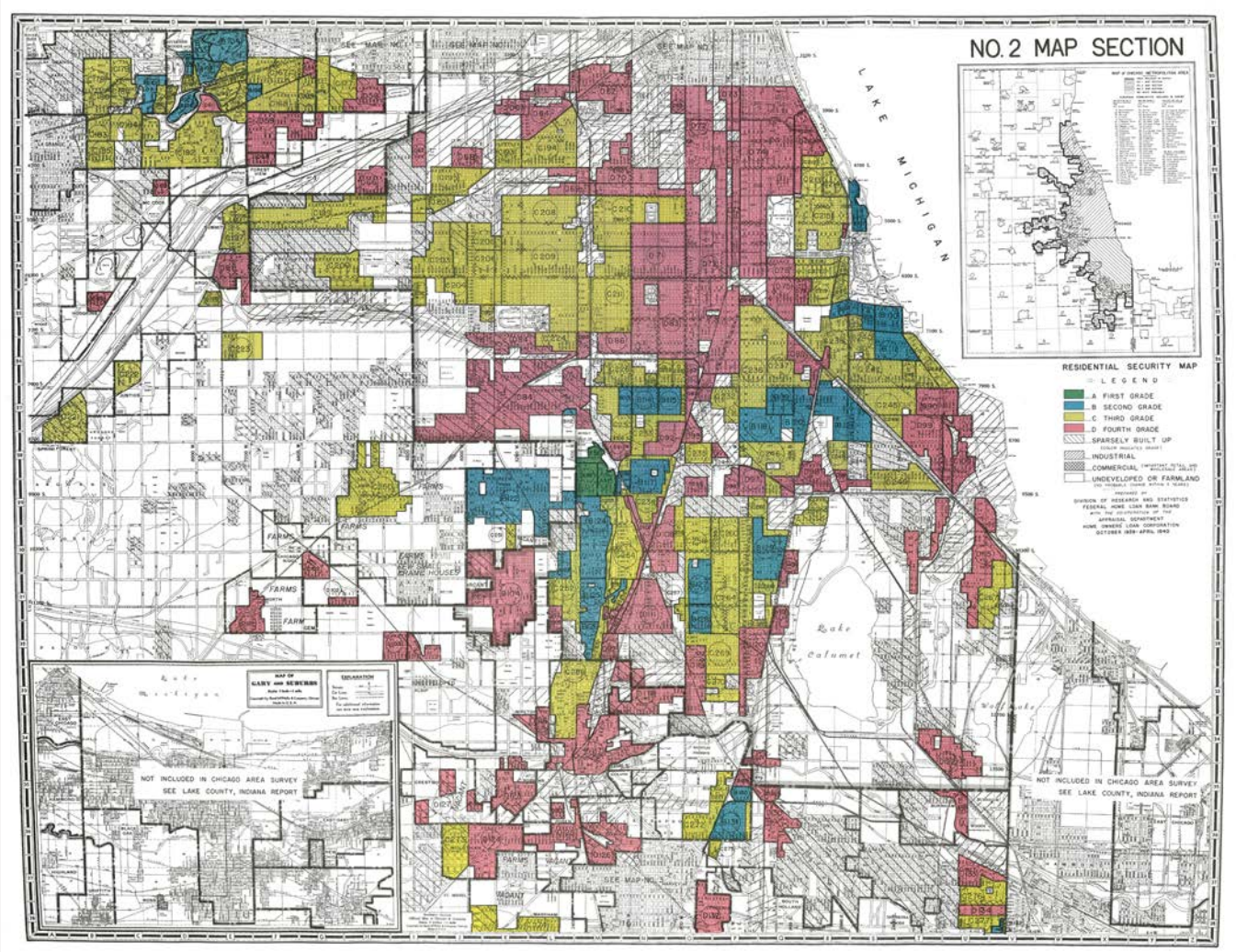
The wealth was extracted by real estate speculators, investment syndicates and other financial entities that sold properties to Black homebuyers through contracts instead of traditional mortgages. The contracts included large down payments and inflated interest rates that produced little or no equity over their terms. The contract sellers could also evict buyers at any time until payments were complete with minimal repercussions. Contract sales exploited an estimated nine of every 10 Black families who purchased homes in Chicago during the era, resulting in negligible family-wealth-building compared to families who enjoyed conventional loans.

HISTORY OF REDLINING IN CHICAGO

1940

- First Grade (considered "best")
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade (considered "hazardous")





Housing Covenants

As a result of the Great Migration of southern Black people to Chicago in the first half of the 20th century, some predominantly white neighborhoods on the North, South and West sides established restrictive covenants that legally prevented homeowners from selling or renting to Black people and, to a lesser extent, people of Jewish or Chinese descent.

Active from the 1910s to the '40s, these covenants limited where Black families could settle, resulting in fewer housing choices, decreased mobility and limited job options. The covenants also increased opportunities for housing exploitation and discrimination in other neighborhoods through contract sales, redlining and other methods.

Blockbusting

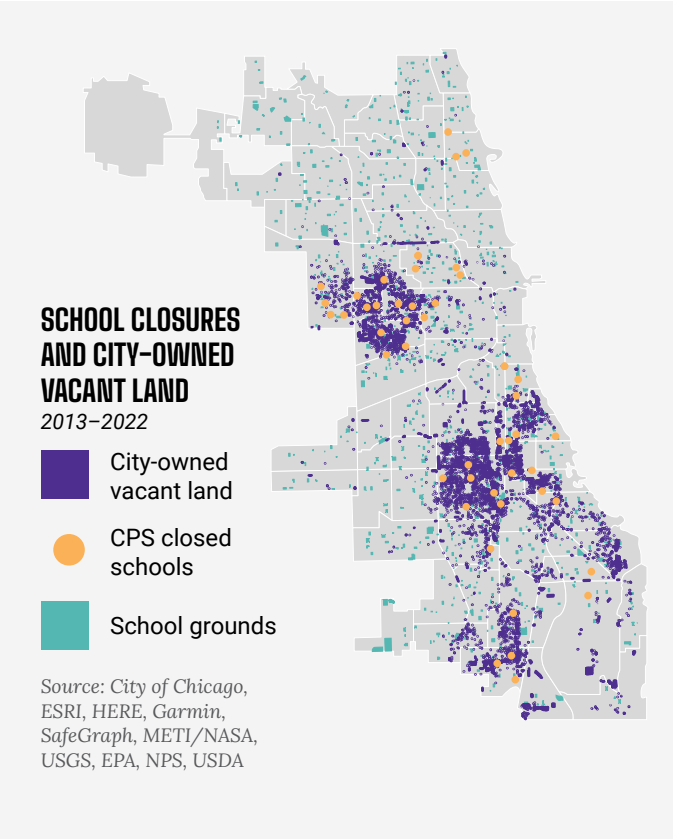
With the dissolution of housing covenant enforcement by the 1950s, unscrupulous real estate companies and their sales agents leveraged white homeowners' fears about the potential impact of Black neighbors on their property values, sometimes convincing multiple adjacent households to expeditiously sell their homes and at reduced rates.

The agents then sold the homes to Black buyers with inflated terms. The nationwide practice, thought to have started in Chicago, victimized both buyers and sellers to the detriment to dozens of neighborhoods across the West and South sides.

Vacant Lots

The City's demolition of thousands of abandoned, vacant homes has left many West and South side neighborhoods pockmarked with overgrown lots with few strategies to replace them with productive uses.

The lots continue to attract public dumping, loitering and other illegal activities that discourage private investment. As of early 2022, the City owned an estimated 10,000 vacant lots, with another 20,000 lots controlled by absentee property owners, banks, financial institutions and other entities with no comprehensive redevelopment strategy. Many vacant lots, particularly on the West Side, are connected to the 1968 Chicago riots sparked in part by the assination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The riots resulted in over 125 fires and 210 buildings being damaged.



School Closures

Following decades of neighborhood disinvestment and depopulation, the 2013 closure of 49 public elementary and high schools due to budget and enrollment issues left hundreds of West and South side families without convenient education options.

Many students were forced to leave their neighborhoods to attend classes, sometimes through dangerous areas. Eighty-eight percent of students impacted by the closings were Black. Due to the absence of long-term planning when the schools were closed, some of the buildings have yet to be repurposed to productive uses.

Policing

Decades of disproportionate enforcement and harassment by Chicago police against people of color have ranged from parking tickets and drug arrests to torture and murder.

A U.S. Department of Justice investigation of the Chicago Police Department produced a 2017 consent decree that acknowledged how officers' systemic misbehavior put lives at risk, especially residents of Black and Latino communities. The decree also outlined reforms for police accountability, protection of residents' civil rights and improvements to police training and support.

Industrial Pollution

Chicago's historic role as an industrial center and its location at the nexus of the country's transportation network have contributed to pollution-related burdens for generations of residents who work at or live near industrial facilities, rail yards, waterways, highways and airports.

Late 20th century federal environmental regulations helped to mitigate air pollution, but the evolution of last-mile delivery facilities near area interstate highways in the 2010s, coupled with the continued environmental burden of the concentration of industrial facilities, continue to cause public health disparities for Chicagoans. Black and Latino families living in communities on the Southwest, West, and Southeast sides that are zoned for heavy industrial use and/or bisected by highways are made more vulnerable to the effects of pollution exposure.

Downtown Development

The City has historically utilized public resources to pursue private and public developments in the central area, which has resulted in the displacement of communities, even as investments have made the area a successful commercial hub.

In the late nineteenth century, the Loop included an established Chinatown, but the composition of the neighborhood changed as anti-Asian sentiment rose in the United States, and the City forced the Asian American population to relocate to encourage continued development. Since the 1960s the City has sought to recreate the central area as a mixed-use neighborhood, often prioritizing resources to catalyze downtown developments, at the expense of other neighborhoods. Guided by formal plans and policies, private sector investments incrementally expanded the footprint of downtown into the Near North, Near South and Near West sides, while public spending revitalized the Loop's cultural amenities and nearby public open spaces. The City's approvals of multibillion-dollar "mega-projects" have emphasized public financial support to redevelop underutilized land within the central area, while many neighborhood development opportunities have remained vacant for decades.

Data and Inclusion

Although Asian-Americans and Native Americans have resided in Chicago throughout the City's history, both groups have traditionally been excluded from the City's historical narrative and have lacked substantial political and social representation.

This exclusion amounts to an erasure of these populations' contributions to Chicago's culture and history. This erasure manifests in the City's political ward mapping and a lack of outreach to these communities when collecting important data. Chicago has the third-largest urban Native American population, yet Native Americans are often talked about in the past tense, or left out entirely. Although Asian Americans constitute approximately 7 percent of Chicago's population, Chicago did not have an Asian American City Council representative until 2011.

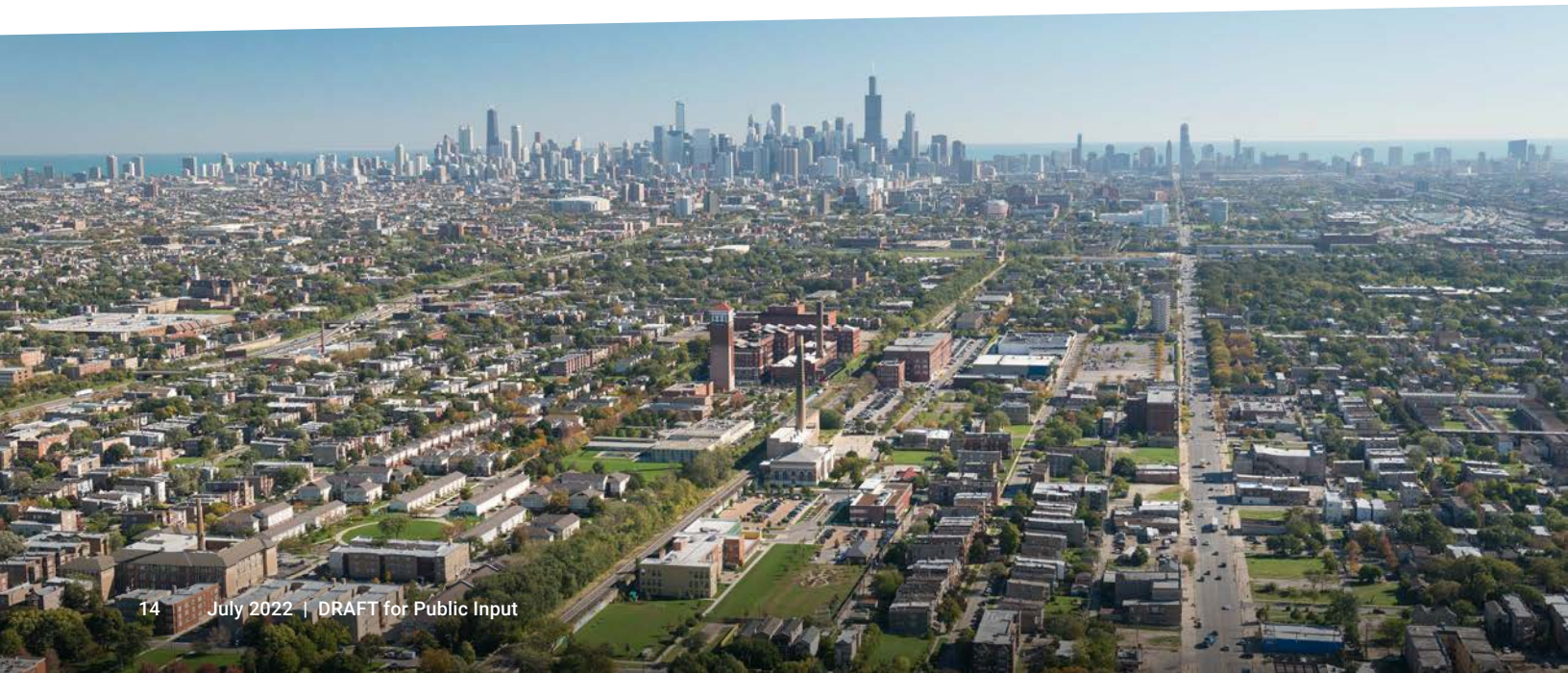
Definitions

We Will's historical reckoning activities were initiated through a series of Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and Department of Planning and Development (DPD) workshops in fall 2020 that included stakeholders' review of challenges and successes of other cities producing citywide plans.

The workshops themes were used to build out the We Will planning process and produced multiple key themes for future study, including Chicago's need to reckon with the city's history of systemic injustice and build trust with communities harmed. Definitions were subsequently produced by a follow-up advisory group of community-based organizations convened by MPC.

The definitions were refined for We Will Chicago below:

Harm	A negative result or burden on a community or population due to formal or informal policies, actions, events or movements.
Historical Acknowledgment	The formal recognition of one or more harms experienced by a group of people and the naming of who perpetrated the harm.
Historical Reckoning	An agreement that seeks to rectify a harm, along with policies and measures to prevent the harm from occurring from again.



MAKING OF A FRAMEWORK

We Will Chicago is a multi-phase planning process to create a formal roadmap for the city's future.

Under the direction of Mayor E. Lightfoot, pre-planning was initiated in August 2020 by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, which convened other City departments and public agencies to establish a strategy that puts residents at the forefront of the process.

A series of workshops was simultaneously hosted by the Metropolitan Planning Council, a non-profit civic group that provides planning assistance to communities and governments. Held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshops were attended by representatives of neighborhood, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations and government entities.

Pre-planning workshops consisted of overviews of recently completed citywide plans in other U.S. cities. Participants determined that, to effectively address local needs, Chicago's citywide plan cannot be a "top down" planning effort led exclusively by government representatives. Instead, it must be guided by community stakeholders with principles that proactively include the marginalized Chicagoans that were excluded or harmed from previous planning efforts and outcomes.

Pre-planning continued through winter 2020 with additional workshops and virtual conversations that involved more than 600 Chicagoans and their thoughts about what the plan should accomplish. By spring, participants identified the guiding principles of equity and resiliency, the seven planning pillars and five themes to guide ongoing research and future policymaking.

The themes include:

- HISTORIC RECKONING AND TRUST-BUILDING
- SYSTEMIC EVALUATION OF EQUITY IMPACTS
- SUSTAINED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
- ACCESSIBLE AND MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH SHARED METRICS AND TRANSPARENCY

Research Teams

With pre-planning complete, We Will's public outreach formally launched in April 2021 with a virtual meeting attended by 800 people. Participants learned how the pre-planning process identified the two principles, five themes and seven pillars. Participants were also advised of next-step needs to identify pillar goals and objectives, and how the goals and objectives would serve as the framework for a draft citywide plan.

To foster community participation, a citywide application process was initiated to recruit individuals and groups on pillar research teams, including roles with stipends for community based partners. Five hundred applications were received, and 115 individuals and 25 organizations were selected to serve on pillar research teams. Selections ensured diversity in geography, age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, occupation, ethnic identity, religion, education, abilities, interests and areas of skill and expertise. The teams also included representatives of relevant City departments and public agencies.

The Advisory Committee and pillar research teams conducted independent research and hosted approximately 100 meetings to review past plans, identify current issues, explore objectives and consider potential policies for implementation. Each meeting was documented by City Bureau, a nonprofit civic media organization, and summaries were posted on the We Will Chicago web site. Summaries included a list of attendees, statement of meeting objectives, links to presentations, participant questions and comments, and key take-aways.

Advisory Committee							
Pillar Research Teams							
ARTS & CULTURE	CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE, & ENERGY	HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS	LIFELONG LEARNING	PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY	TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
EACH TEAM IS COMPRISED OF:	Volunteers | Community Partners | Co-Chairs | City & Sister Agencies						
EACH TEAM IS SUPPORTED BY:	Research Lead | Facilitation Lead | Documenter | Artist-Organizer						

Meeting-in-a-Box

The Metropolitan Planning Council and the Chicago Department of Planning & Development created a "Meeting-in-a-Box" toolkit that enabled neighborhood associations, block clubs, families and other groups to host their own We Will meetings to gather feedback. The virtual toolkit provided a facilitator script and a detailed instruction guide on how to solicit and collect group feedback about We Will's principles, themes and pillars.

Artist-led Engagement

Alongside community-led research teams, and through a close partnership with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the City selected Honey Pot Performance and a team of more than two dozen artists to lead public engagement for the We Will process.

Aligned with the pillars, artist and organizer teams conducted more than 80 virtual and in-person events throughout the city. A mobile team increased the group's reach to specific locations and constituencies. Artists engaged participants in ways that included performance art, design exercises, creative dialogue and other techniques that facilitated discussion of the critical issues facing communities today, and that created space for new visioning. These opportunities fostered the participation of more than 1400 residents

in the planning process during 2021. Comments and specific policy recommendations were collected by the artists and included in each pillar's goals and objectives through artist participation in research team meetings and through the artists' final reports.

Draft Goals, Objectives and Next Steps

In June 2022, following semi-annual updates to the Chicago Plan Commission over the previous two years, We Will's draft goals and objectives were finalized by the pillar research teams with input from the artist led engagement events, meeting-in-a-box submissions and other forms of public feedback.

An eighth planning pillar was added to address a recurring theme heard throughout the research team process to date: **Civic and Community Engagement**.

The draft framework also includes an historical acknowledgment section that identifies the causes of many inequities in the city as well as brief overviews of other City plans and their results, both intended and otherwise.

Through November 1, 2022, the draft framework plan's goals and objectives are in the hands of Chicagoans

to scrutinize, discuss and refine. Multiple public engagement opportunities are either planned or underway, with many virtual and in-person events to enable interaction with We Will planning staff and City representatives.

Feedback gathered during this phase will also position the City to strengthen and refine the 600+ policy ideas created by each pillar team to guide implementation, which are available in draft form on wewillchicago.com.

Here's how to participate in the process:

Read the draft plan and share comments on the We Will website and social media.

Take a survey on the We Will website or at a Chicago Public Library branch.

Participate in a We Will event in your neighborhood.

Attend an event and ask questions about the plan.

Organize a "Meeting-in-a-Box" session with family, friends or neighbors.

Sign-up for We Will updates by email.

Public input will help We Will staff finalize a proposed framework by the end of 2022. In early 2023, We Will Chicago will be presented to the Chicago Plan Commission for potential adoption.

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **We Will Chicago** team, visit wewillchicago.com*

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE PLAN

01

This document is a **proposed framework** for funding and practices to improve our lives.

In it you will find...

GOALS
what we want to achieve

OBJECTIVES
how we will achieve it

DATA
information to support the goals

02

The plan is divided by topics, called **PILLARS**.

There are eight pillars, each one has a report.

The reports are labeled with the **pillar or topic name** and a **description** of the topic.

03 EACH PILLAR REPORT INCLUDES...

An introduction

Key terms relevant to the topic

Goals

Objectives

Supporting data

"Reckoning is necessary. Reckoning is urgent. And make no mistake, it is about disrupting systems of oppression."

– Emilia Chico

WE WILL CHICAGO

THE PLAN

PILLAR 1 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

ARTS & CULTURE

Supporting equitable access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago's 77 communities

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

ARTS & CULTURE

Arts and culture are fundamental components of healthy communities, providing social, educational and economic benefits that shape people's lives and neighborhoods.

Despite contributing value to all communities, access to arts and culture is unevenly distributed throughout Chicago. While nearly 80 percent of Chicagoans believe arts and culture improve neighborhood vitality, only half of residents believe arts and cultural activities are available where they live, according to a recent Chicago Community Trust survey. Financial support for arts and culture organizations in Chicago is also uneven, with organizations led by people of color receiving half the grant funding that majority white entities typically receive, according to a report from ENRICH Chicago and Heartland Alliance.

> *"Every community needs different things. Support looks different. Support should be led by the people who are trusted in their community through partnerships, nonprofits and informal projects."*
>
> – Wisdom Baty | **Honey Pot Performance, Artist-Organizer**

The Arts & Culture pillar's goals are intended to improve access to cultural opportunities citywide, help make Chicago a place where working artists and creative sector workers can earn a living wage and build successful careers, and increase awareness and appreciation for the city's diverse cultural traditions, organizations, and artists.

KEY TERMS

Creative Sector/ Industries	An overarching term to capture the breadth of activity within artistic and cultural industries, including nonprofit organizations, creative businesses, museums and art galleries, music, film and television, digital media, theater, dance, fashion, publishing, architecture and design. Activities involve the development, production, dissemination, and preservation of creative goods and services, as well as related endeavors such as education and management.
Creative Worker	Anyone who earns income from creative, cultural or arts-based pursuits, or works within the creative sector as an employee, independent contractor, entrepreneur or gig worker.

> *"Arts and culture will be coming out of neighborhood-based cultural spaces that will be independent from... [past] models...it won't require any bureaucratic validation to exist...it will be able to be sporadic, permanent, continuous and planned. But most importantly, it will be both accessible and affordable."*

– *Libby* | **Ravenswood, We Will participant**

GOAL 1

Support the resiliency of the creative sector—its workers, organizations and businesses—for a healthy and vibrant city.

Chicago's cultural environment requires almost all of the area's professional artists to work more than one job, according to a Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) report. While the number of nonprofit arts and culture organizations per capita in Chicago is higher than many other major U.S. metropolitan areas, their average budgets are significantly smaller and they are disproportionately underfunded by local government, the report also determined.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Strengthen the infrastructure and systems of support needed for creative sector organizations, businesses and individuals to thrive.

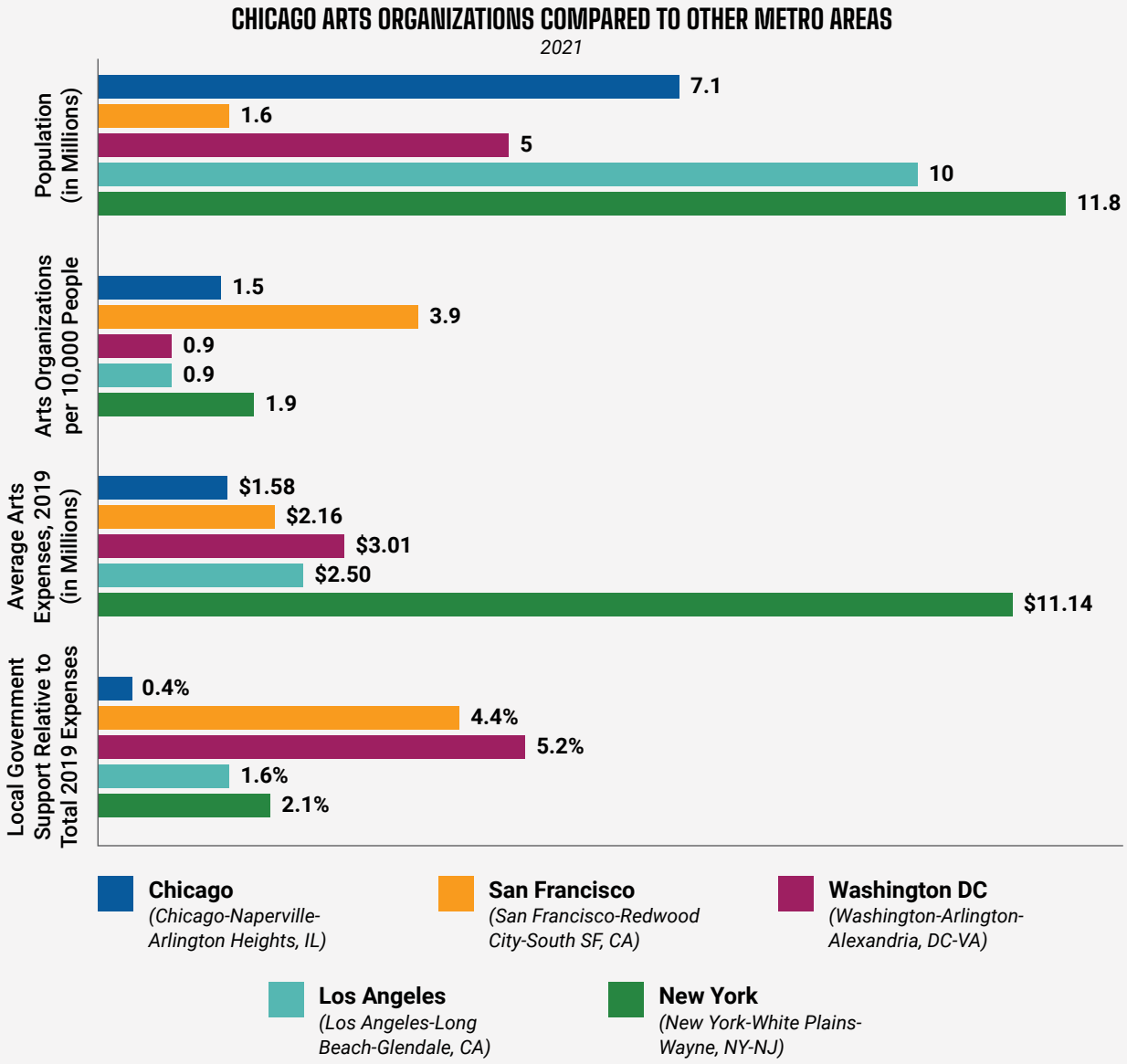
1.2 Decrease barriers that have prevented access to city funding for creatives and arts and culture organizations; prioritizing racial, gender, disability, immigration status, and geographic and other equity considerations.

1.3 Ensure that employment policies for creative workers used by public and private entities are fair and equitable.

1.4 Support the relationships necessary for creatives to develop skills, pursue opportunities, access jobs and connect within the field.

SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture organizations have significantly smaller budgets and receive less local government funding than organizations in other metropolitan areas.



Source: SMUDataArts and Bloomberg Associates

> *"Some of the things we can name are the choices of how Chicago invested municipal money led to the creation of cultural assets and businesses in the Loop and Navy Pier and, over a period of time, contributed to the loss of cultural assets and businesses in Bronzeville and Pullman and South Shore."*
>
> – Henry Wishcamper | **Urban Juncture, Co-Director of Community Development**

GOAL 2

Engage artists, creative businesses and cultural organizations to advance the quality of life in all Chicago communities.

Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture entities are predominantly headquartered in the Loop area and along the lakefront. As a result, many residents do not benefit from the economic, educational and quality-of-life contributions of the city's arts scene.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

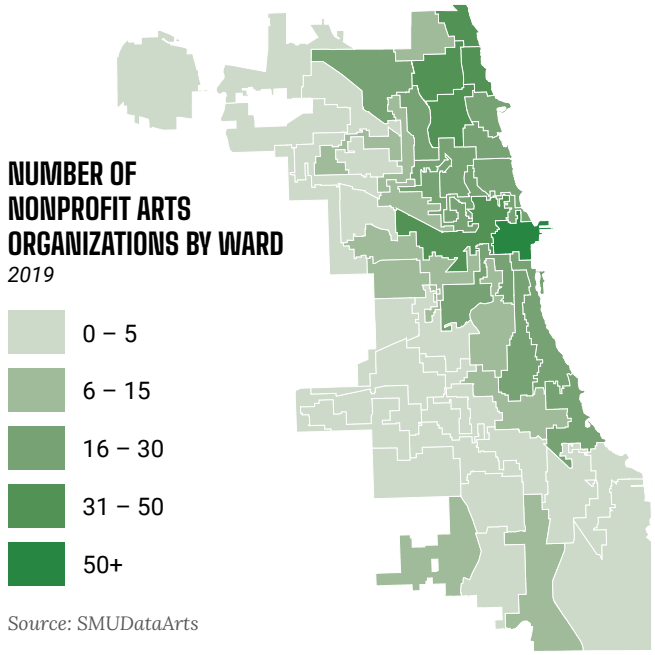
2.1 Use the power of arts and culture to build vibrant, healthy communities.

2.2 Increase the number of creative businesses and cultural spaces in community areas that lack them.

2.3 Prioritize private and public investment in historically under-resourced community areas.

SUPPORTING DATA

The vast majority of Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture organizations are located along the lakefront.



Source: SMUDataArts

14% of Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture organizations are located in just **ONE WARD (DOWNTOWN)**;

ONLY 21% of the City's arts and culture nonprofit organizations are located in **64% OF THE CITY'S WARDS**.

GOAL 3

Ensure all Chicagoans have access to robust, relevant and joyful arts education and to creative workforce opportunities at every stage of their lives.

The arts provide pleasure and support for human growth, including an individual's capacity for empathy and meaningful social bonds, according to a report by the Rand Corp. Roughly 40% of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) facilities are failing to provide strong arts programming, and Black students are disproportionately less likely than students in other racial or ethnic groups to access quality arts education, according to a recent report from Ingenuity Inc. Low-income students who attend arts-related classes and programs are twice as likely to finish college as their peers with no arts education. Their dropout rates prior to college are exponentially lower than their peers with no arts education, according to Americans for the Arts.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Advance access to pre K-12 arts education within Chicago Public Schools and other school-based providers.

3.2 Advance access to lifelong arts education opportunities within each Chicago community area.

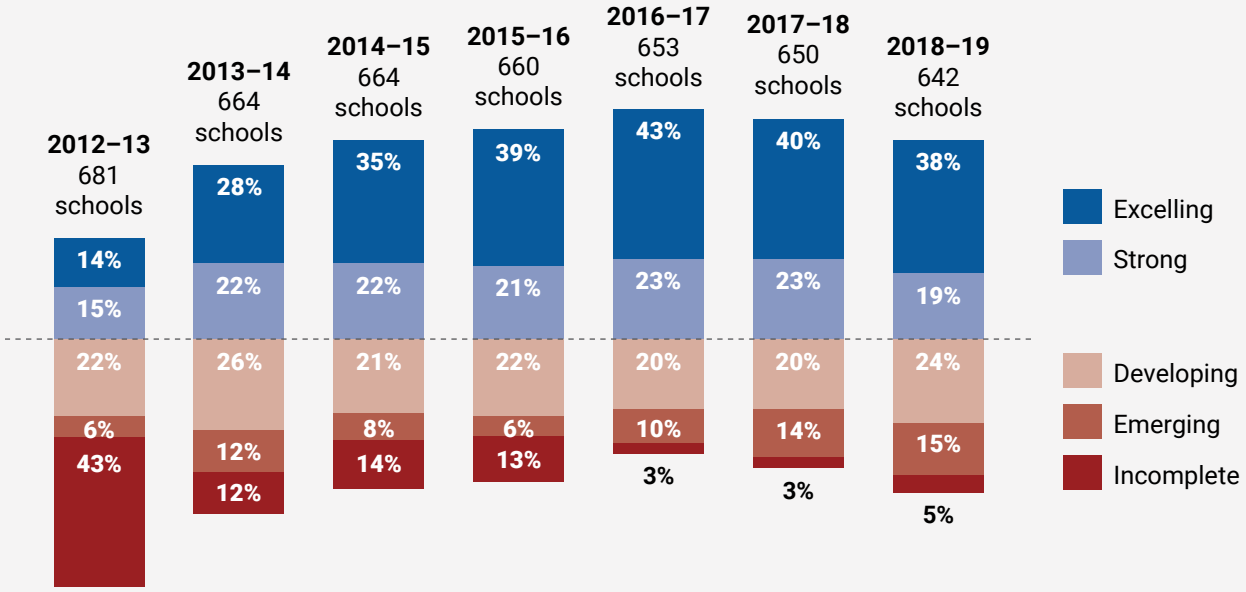
3.3 Strengthen the infrastructure needed to support pathways to careers in arts education as part of broad workforce development efforts.

SUPPORTING DATA

The number of CPS schools with arts education programs that are strong or excelling has doubled over the last 16 years.

CREATIVE SCHOOLS CERTIFICATION CUMULATIVE SCORES OVER TIME (ACCESS AND QUALITY)

Chicago



Source: Ingenuity

> *[Ingenuity finds] that Black students are significantly less likely than their peers to have access to quality arts programming, even after controlling for the enrollment and type of school the students attend.*
>
> —*Ingenuity Data Snapshot* | **Arts Education Access in CPS**

GOAL 4

Promote awareness and appreciation for the value of the city's cultural sector—its current and historical contributions—to residents and those beyond the Chicago's borders.

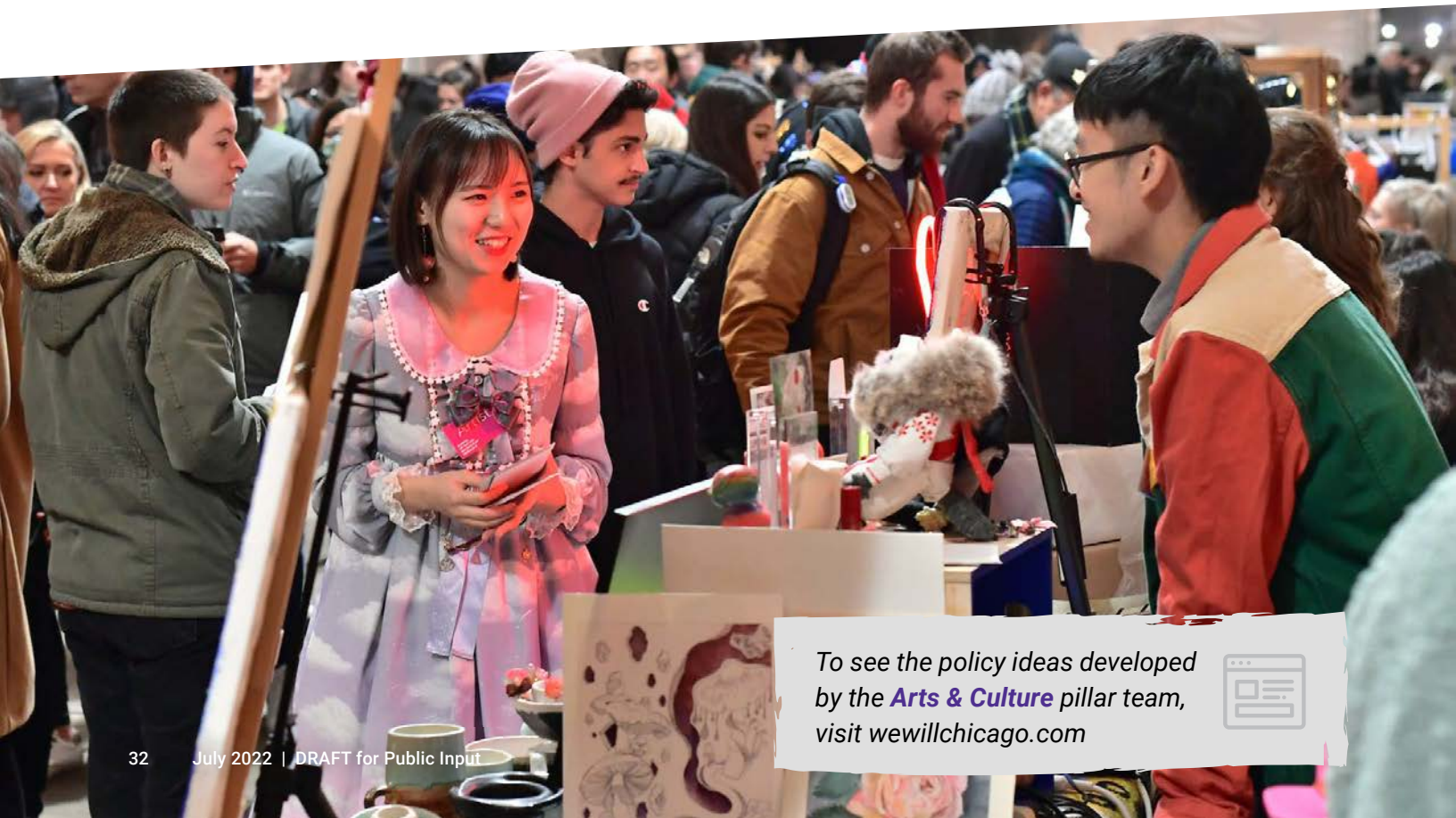
City support for local arts organizations can take many forms, including coordination with sister agencies, local media and cultural organizations to promote Chicago's cultural resources and opportunities. In 2022, DCASE launched a strategic initiative to market more neighborhood-based arts programming, in addition to ongoing efforts to highlight downtown opportunities. As the city grows and changes with time—welcoming new residents from across the country and around the world—these strategies should continue to evolve, promoting the cultural traditions and celebrations of new and existing residents alike.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Expand the focus of the City's marketing efforts to highlight the cultural assets and programming of all community areas.

4.2 Support and respond to local marketing and advocacy efforts by communities and arts and culture groups.



*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Arts & Culture** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 2 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring all Chicago stakeholders have opportunities to help guide the city's future

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As the city confronts challenges like racial health and wealth gaps and climate change in the decades to come, it needs an engaged, empowered public that leverages the power of democracy to improve lives and communities.

Chicago needs a City government that is responsive and accountable to evolving, community-identified concerns and solutions. For decades, many Chicagoans, especially youth, communities of color and residents with disabilities, have been ignored, disengaged or shut out from local democratic processes. City government needs to develop new, creative tools and partnerships to proactively build trust with communities that have been historically excluded from many of the benefits of living in a great city like Chicago.

While all city agencies undertake community engagement efforts in some form, approaches are hampered by a lack of staff capacity, training, inter-agency coordination and procedures that promote accountability and accessibility. Public engagement by the City is therefore seldom anchored in trust, and residents perceive meetings as superficial afterthoughts that confirm predetermined solutions. An unending circle of discussions without implementation has led to frustration and fatigue, and has reduced participation in democracy.

KEY TERMS

Civic Engagement	Involves any individual or group activity that addresses issues of public concern to protect public values or makes a change in a community. It is instrumental to democracy.
Community Engagement	The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting their well-being. It is a powerful vehicle for environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs and practices (CDC, 1997).
Truth and Reconciliation	A process undertaken to discover and reveal past wrongdoing by a government (or non-state actors) in the hope of resolving conflict left over from the past.

> *"Most people value their time, and if they feel like the process does not allow them to give input, they check out very quickly...I think there's a difference between transparency and empowering people to contribute to the decision-making process."*

– *May Toy* | **Skinner Park Advisory Council, President**

GOAL 1

Build more robust and effective civic infrastructure to enable Chicagoans to improve their lives and neighborhoods.

Because community engagement by the City of Chicago occurs across many different departments, sister agencies and entities like ward offices, there are no uniform standards on how to conduct public input and engagement processes that shape neighborhood-level and citywide decisions. Strengthening the ways Chicagoans can engage in public life includes enforcing systemic improvements to the City's processes and tapping into Chicago's abundance of neighborhood organizations that already bring neighbors together to strengthen their communities, and help residents access resources every day.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

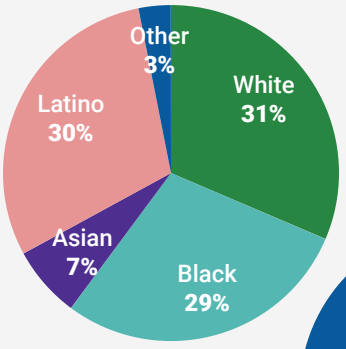
1.1 Create stronger, proactive, long-term partnerships with community organizations, block clubs and other coalitions to increase engagement.

1.2 Support and encourage more inclusive and creative community engagement across City departments and sister agencies such as the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Chicago Public Libraries (CPL).

SUPPORTING DATA

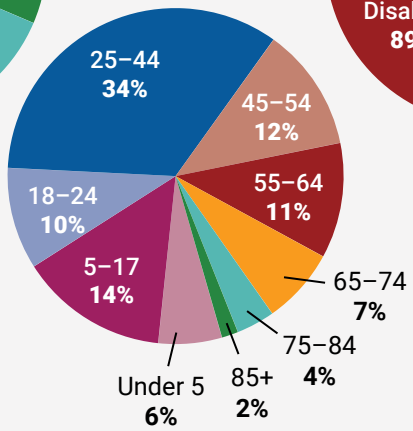
Chicago's civic infrastructure should address the City's diverse population across race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability and immigration status.

POPULATION BY RACE/ETHNICITY
2020, Chicago

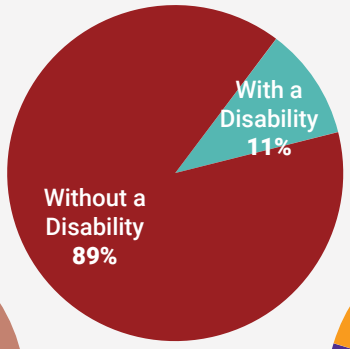


Source: 2016-2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 U.S. Census, CMAP

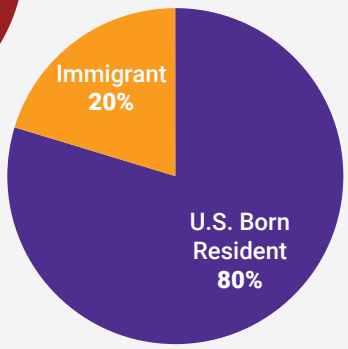
POPULATION BY AGE
2020, Chicago



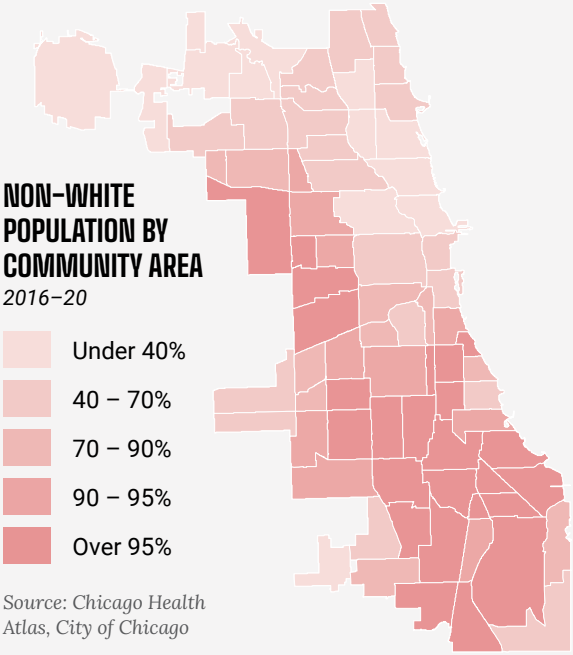
POPULATION BY DISABILITY
2020, Chicago



POPULATION BY IMMIGRANT STATUS
2020, Chicago

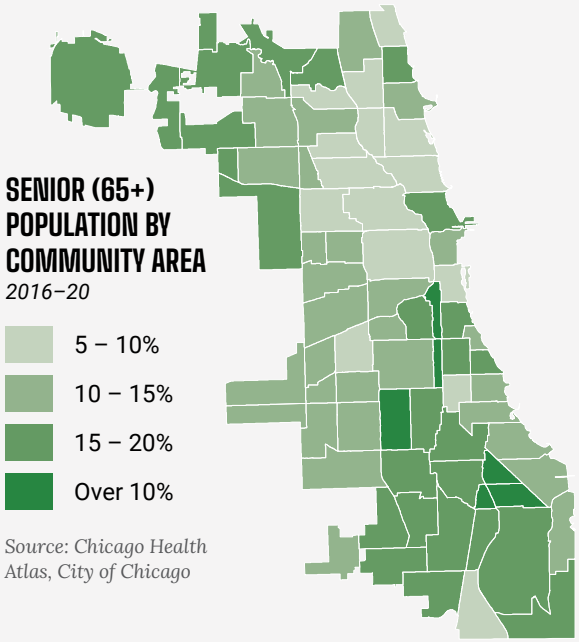


Most Chicago community areas have a non-white majority.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, City of Chicago

13% of the City's population is 65 years or older.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, City of Chicago

GOAL 2

Increase public access and participation in civic and democratic processes.

Local democracy is strongest when residents are deeply engaged—informing and shaping policies that directly impact their communities and advocating for issues critical to a more equitable and resilient future. Only an engaged public can hold political leaders accountable and elect leaders who are representative of Chicago's many diverse needs.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

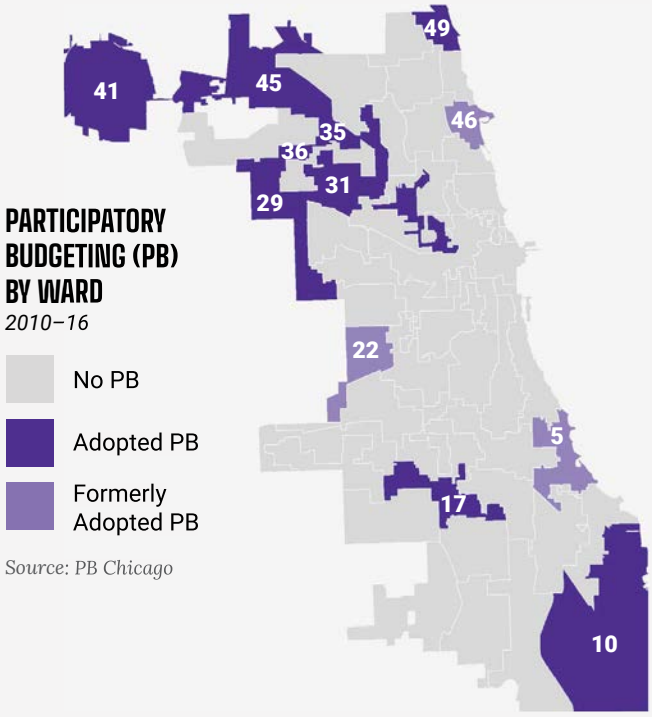
2.1 Ensure equitable access to virtual and in-person public meetings and processes across City departments and agencies.

2.2 Increase equitable representation and participation in government and democratic processes.

2.3 Welcome new immigrants and strengthen Chicago's leadership as a sanctuary city.

SUPPORTING DATA

Many Chicago wards utilize a participatory budgeting process.



Source: PB Chicago

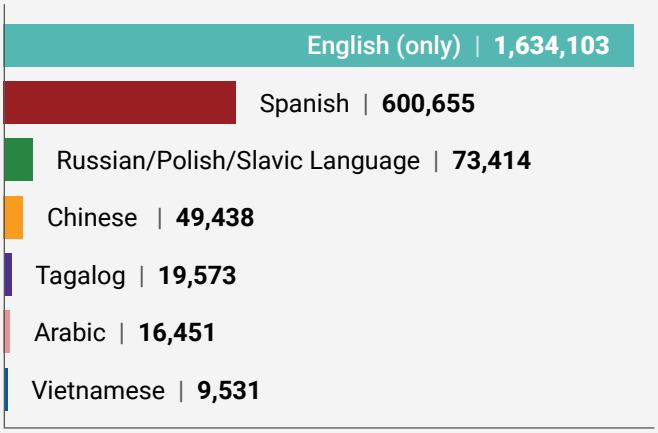
251 PROJECTS were funded through the Participatory Budgeting process between 2010–16.

Selected projects included underpass murals, street lighting improvements, bike lanes, pedestrian improvements, street and sidewalk repairs, accessibility improvements, and tree planting.

> *"I just wanted to bring transparency to the lens of accessibility. Sometimes organizations will feel like they're being transparent, but the information that they're providing is only in one language."*
>
> – *Maureen Burns* | **Community Health Worker**

Approximately 36% of Chicago residents speak a language other than English.

TOP 7 LANGUAGES BY PREFERENCES
2016–20, Chicago



Source: ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates

GOAL 3

Improve government transparency and Chicagoans' access to data.

Chicagoans should have meaningful access to city records— not just the ability to access them, but the ability to find them in a user-friendly way with sufficient context to identify and understand the information. Access to open data fuels equity by enabling city officials, residents, advocates and journalists to identify and address disparities in neighborhood conditions and access to city services. The City needs to build on recent open data and modernization improvements to truly make all resident-facing systems accessible, particularly for people with disabilities and low access to technology.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Improve and modernize City data collection, disaggregation and distribution systems to develop a best-in-class practice of affirmative and automated release of data and records.

3.2 Ensure equitable access to data for all Chicagoans.

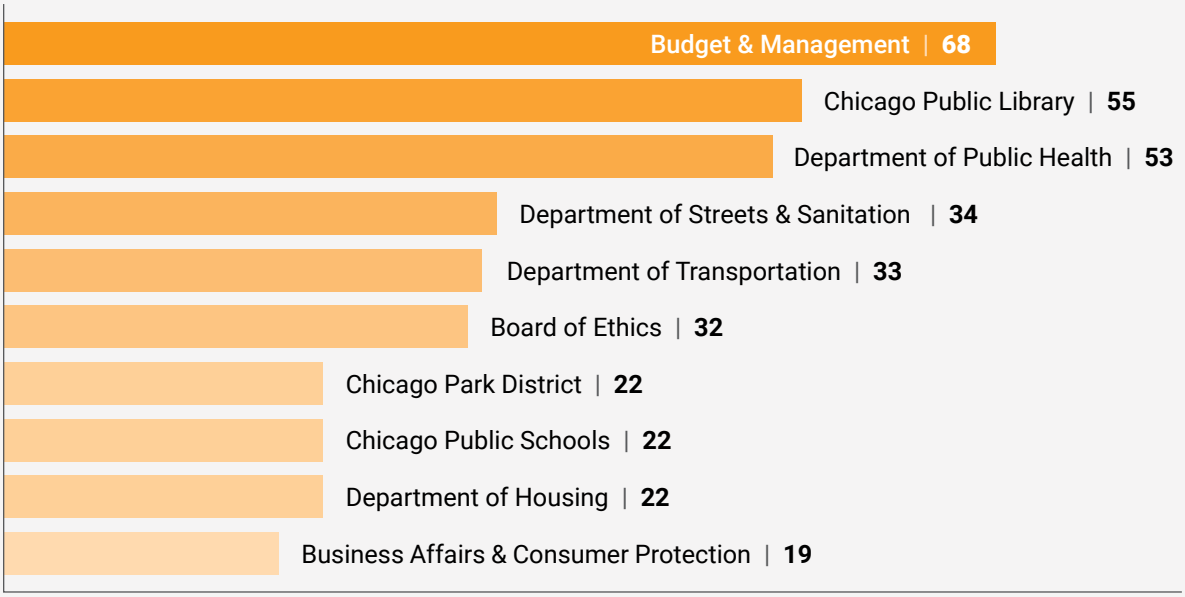
3.3 Make it easier for Chicagoans to understand and participate in City Council, committee and other public body processes.

SUPPORTING DATA

A wide range of City departments have committed to open access to data.

DEPARTMENTS WITH THE MOST OPEN DATASETS IN CHICAGO'S OPEN DATA PORTAL (# OF DATASETS)

2021–22, Chicago



Source: City of Chicago AIS

The City's open data resources are accessed millions of times every year.

POPULAR DATASETS ACCESSED 2021–22

2022, Chicago

Source: City of Chicago AIS

GOAL 4

Eliminate barriers to accessing City services and supports.

Chicagoans interact with government in myriad ways every day—from paying water bills to checking out library books, accessing City-funded mental health services or getting car stickers. The City must strive to make all resident-facing services as simple, efficient and user-friendly as possible. This also means continuously improving access to services and supports for underserved populations, like undocumented residents, residents reentering society from incarceration, residents experiencing homelessness and new immigrants or refugees.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Make city processes touching residents, workers, visitors and businesses more streamlined, accessible and equitable.

4.2 Protect and provide resources to support residents who are disproportionately vulnerable and often excluded from safety net benefits and other services.

SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's poverty rates have not significantly changed since 2015.

PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Chicago

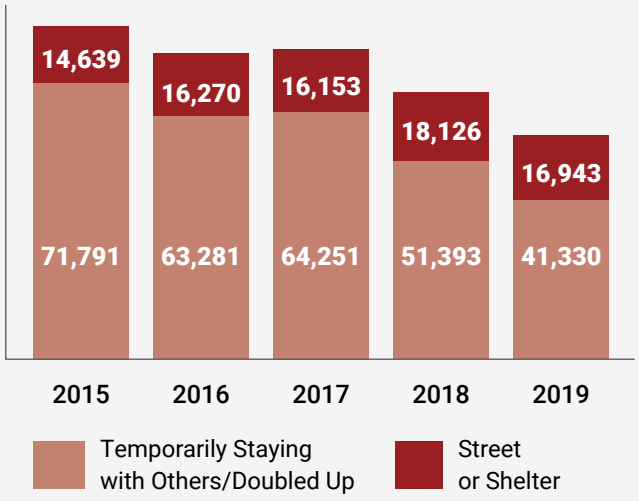
	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL
Black	339,924	44%	314,105	44%	316,517	45%	286,979	44%	271,992	45%
White	265,926	34%	225,135	31%	241,018	34%	239,581	37%	212,726	35%
Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	52,183	12%	43,430	15%	47,923	11%	51,685	9%	40,616	10%
American Indian or Alaska Native	3,340	7%	1,671	6%	3,624	7%	2,757	8%	3,858	7%
Other Race	94,227	0%	109,584	0%	79,447	1%	60,038	0%	60,906	1%
Two or More Races	18,243	2%	21,779	3%	16,449	2%	12,891	2%	12,877	2%
Latino	252,181	33%	228,817	32%	204,272	29%	197,884	30%	180,389	30%

Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

Homelessness has recently decreased but still impacts more than 58,000 people.

TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS EXPERIENCED

Chicago



Source: Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

> *"When we talk about getting to equity, we've talked about it as both an outcome and a process. We're going to focus on equity as a process and we know that requires a new way of doing business."*
>
> — Kate McMahon | **Director, Health Equity in All Policies, Chicago Department of Public Health**

GOAL 5

Ensure equity, community engagement and historical reckoning drive public decision-making.

Chicago has disparities across all quality-of-life indicators by race and ethnicity. In order to realize the We Will Chicago vision for greater equity and resiliency, leaders must change the standard way that government operates. Race-neutral or "color-blind" policies only exacerbate existing inequities and inequities. The legacy of structural racism and public policies that harmed Black, Latino, Asian and Native American communities compel government to initiate repairs and proactively build equity considerations into all decision-making. Many communities have lost trust—or never trusted—government, and have no faith in public accountability to historically marginalized communities. City government needs to support collective racial healing to reimagine and build a more equitable, inclusive future.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

5.1 Establish standards and structures for community-driven decision-making.

5.2 Educate City officials and staff about equity and racial justice.

5.3 Integrate health, racial equity and climate impact tools and analysis into policymaking and planning.

5.4 Support ongoing truth, reconciliation and healing efforts.

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Civic & Community Engagement** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 3 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Creating a more prosperous and equitable economy for all Chicago residents and workers

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chicago is the economic engine of a $720 billion metropolitan economy that is bigger than all but 21 countries in the world.

However, not all Chicagoans have equitable access to the City's dynamic economy. Systemic racism and racial segregation have led to stymied opportunities for people of color and decades of disinvestment in neighborhoods where they live. Majority Black and Latino neighborhoods have higher rates of poverty and unemployment, along with lower levels of median income and wealth, than majority white neighborhoods.

Targeted interventions to build on the city's multifaceted strengths and make the economy more just and equitable for all would boost the entire region. A Metropolitan Planning Council report estimated that if levels of economic and racial segregation were reduced to the national median, local households would collectively earn an additional $4.4 billion in income and the market value of area goods and services would rise by approximately $8 billion. The economic impact would indirectly help address other city issues, including public safety, transportation and education while fostering a more diverse and resilient workforce.

> *"When we think about Economic Development, we should be thinking about how we are investing in the people of Chicago."*
>
> – Cory M | **Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership**

The goals of the Economic Development pillar are intended to create a more prosperous and equitable economy for all Chicago residents and workers.

KEY TERMS

Economic Clusters	Involve geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field. Economic clusters that are meaningfully present within a region have a combination of linked industries, suppliers, service-providers, government agencies and institutions working collectively to advance training and education, research and production of a similar field.
Family Wealth	The estimated value of a family's assets—such as their home, small business, retirement accounts and monitory savings, less the value of their debt from credit-cards, student loans and home mortgage.
Unbanked & Underbanked	A person or family with no bank account and/or relies on alternative financial entities to cash pay checks, such as through currency exchanges, or obtain loans, such as through high-interest storefront lenders.

> *"We have Black businesses that are committed to community, legacy and have a willingness to thrive. Historic black business in thriving black communities that are being resilient despite racism, strategic disinvestment and limited resources is the economic development that we want to encourage and get more support on."*
>
> — Serrater Chapman

GOAL 1

Build and sustain generational wealth and shared prosperity for Black and Latino communities.

The nation's well documented racial wealth gaps are particularly pronounced in Chicago, where the median wealth of South Side households is less than 5% of the wealth of north suburban households, according to a recent Urban Institute report. Perpetuated by government housing policies beginning particularly post-World War II that accelerated wealth-building for white households while systemically and intentionally denying opportunity to communities of color and discriminatory lending practices such as redlining and contract selling that intentionally extracted wealth from communities of color, the wealth gap means that Black and Latino families overwhelmingly have less cash savings and financial investments than white families on average. More than 40% of Chicago's Black and Latino households have limited or no access to traditional bank accounts, requiring the use of high-fee check cashing services that can cost a full-time worker $40,000 over the course of a career.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Increase access to responsible capital and financial services.

1.2 Improve financial literacy and access to safety net benefits.

1.3 Grow individual and household wealth through asset ownership.

1.4 Grow community wealth through local, democratic, shared ownership and control of neighborhood assets.

SUPPORTING DATA

Cook County has stark differences in wealth.

HIGHEST NET WORTH
Northfield and New Trier Townships: **$914,410**

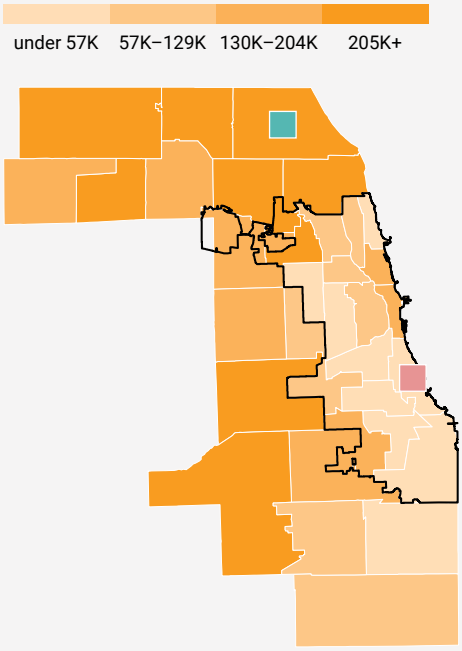
Households of Color: **17%**

LOWEST NET WORTH
South Shore, Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Grand Boulevard & Douglas: **$4,439**

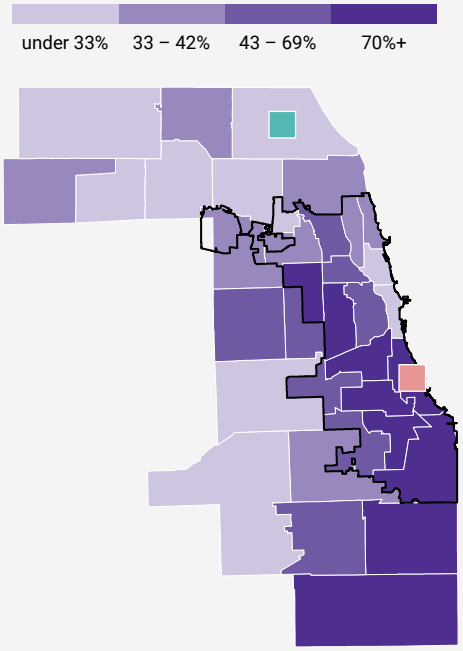
Households of Color: **89%**

Source: Urban Institute

MEDIAN NET WORTH ($)
2018

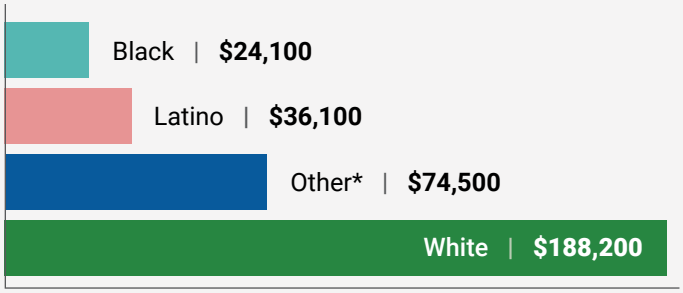


SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS OF COLOR
2018



Nationwide, white families have approximately eight times more wealth than Black families.

MEDIAN NET WORTH
2019, national

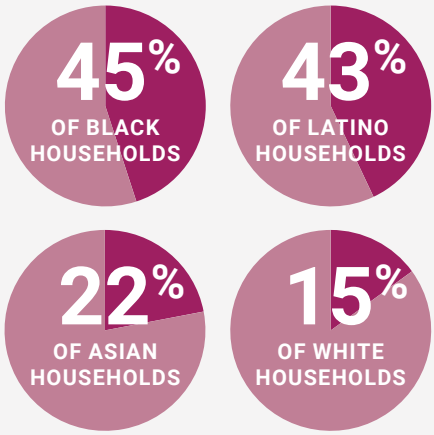


**Other families—a diverse group that includes those identifying as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, other race and all respondents reporting more than one racial identification*

Source: Federal Reserve–Survey of Consumer Finances 2019, SB Friedman

Nearly half of Black and Latino families don't use traditional banks for financial services.

UNBANKED AND UNDERBANKED HOUSEHOLDS BY RACE
2018 estimates, Chicago



Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Based on 2018 Census Data

GOAL 2

Support business growth throughout Chicago, especially businesses owned by Black and Latino people.

Chicago has one of the world's largest and most diversified economies, and the city is globally competitive in multiple economic clusters including financial services, marketing and publishing, manufacturing, transportation distribution and logistics (TDL), life sciences, healthcare, and information technology. However, much of the city's economic activity is concentrated in and around downtown.

Many majority-Black, South Side neighborhoods have less than one quarter the number of active businesses compared to majority-white, North Side neighborhoods. Business ownership gaps by race and ethnicity is also uneven. Black and Latino residents make up approximately 60% of the city's population but own only 4% (Black) and 9% (Latino) of local businesses respectively, according to recent U.S. Census Bureau data.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Support Chicago's economic clusters that have high potential for growth and benefit Chicagoans and their neighborhoods.

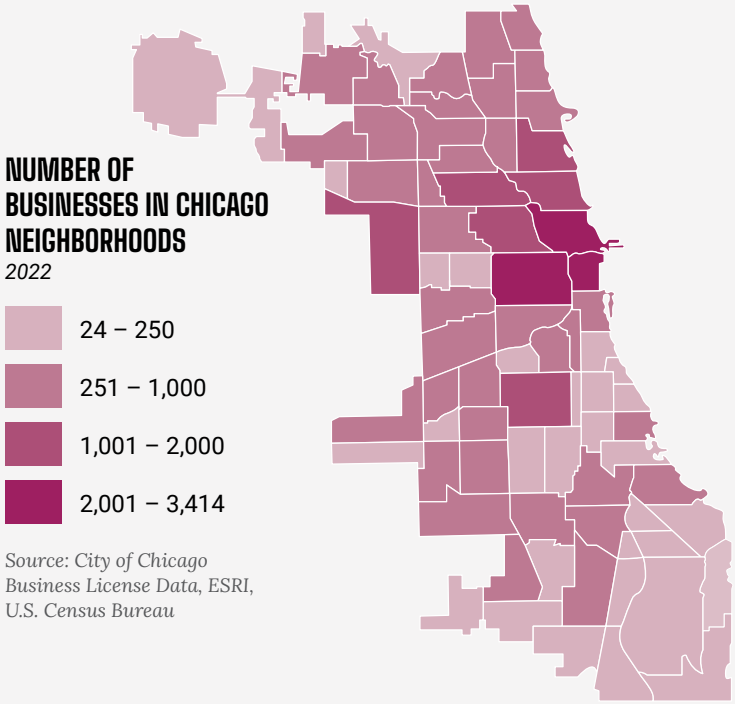
2.2 Prioritize resources and investment in small businesses and entrepreneurship programs.

2.3 Increase the availability of quality, affordable real estate in viable commercial and industrial areas.

2.4 Promote equitable public and private sector procurement processes.

SUPPORTING DATA

South Side communities have a fraction of the business licenses as other areas.



Many majority-Black South Side community areas have

LESS THAN 25%

of active businesses compared to majority-white North Side neighborhoods.

Black and Latino residents own disproportionately fewer businesses than white residents.

BUSINESS OWNERSHIP BY RACE, ETHNICITY AND GENDER

2017 (race and ethnicity), 2020 (gender), City of Chicago

	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES	% OF BUSINESSES OWNED	% OF POPULATION
White	38,086	75%	36%
Black	1,845	4%	29%
Asian	5,499	11%	7%
Other	5,067	10%	28%
Total	**50,497**	**100%**	**-**
Latino	4,393	9%	30%
Female	10,807	21%	51%

Source: 2017 Annual Business Survey, 2020 U.S. Census, SB Friedman

GOAL 3

Invest in equitable and inclusive workforce development to build resilient economic clusters.

Despite the addition of 170,000 jobs to Chicago's economy between 2011 and 2019, the city's unemployment rate remains uneven by race. Black and Latino unemployment rates are four and two times higher than white unemployment rates respectively, according to 2020 Census data. Black Chicagoans also have the lowest median household income among all races and their incomes grew at the slowest rate during this time. As people of color become the majority of the region's workforce, achieving racial equity will have significant economic benefits. According to a National Equity Atlas study, eliminating racial gaps in income could boost the regional economy by $136 billion per year.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Promote career pathways to high-quality, living-wage jobs in both stable and growing economic clusters.

3.2 Enhance employer leadership in hiring, retaining and promoting diverse workforces.

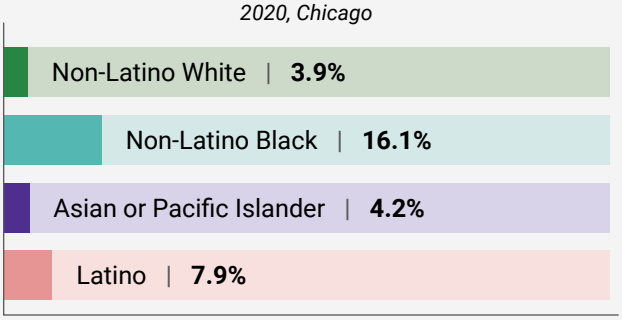
3.3 Identify and remove barriers to job participation.

SUPPORTING DATA

The unemployment rate of Black residents is four times larger than white residents.

UNEMPLOYMENT BY RACE

2020, Chicago

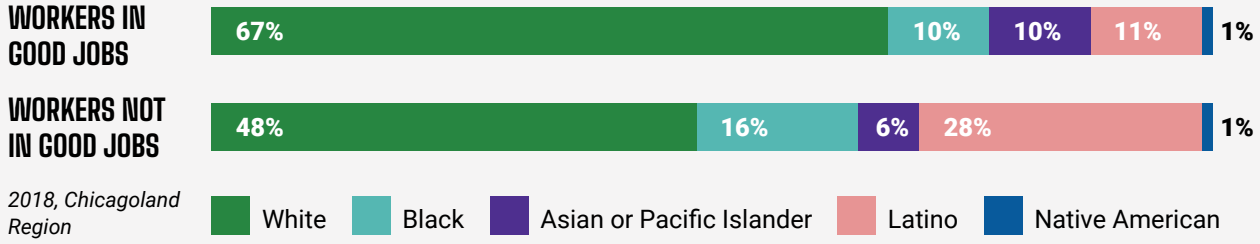


Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Chicago Health Atlas

> *"The Chicago region's gross domestic product could be more than $136 billion larger if racial gaps in income were eliminated."*
>
> – 2021 PolicyLink and USC Equity Research Institute

White workers are overrepresented in good* jobs overall.

*Characteristics include a living-wage compensation, stable or growing base of employment, and automation resiliency.



Source: Advancing Workforce Equity in Chicago, PolicyLink

Among all races, Black Chicagoans have the lowest median household income.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY RACE

Chicago

	NON-LATINO WHITE	NON-LATINO BLACK	ASIAN	LATINO
2010	$61,040	$30,918	$55,840	$41,979
2019	$77,989	$33,301	$70,257	$50,496
% Change	28%	8%	26%	20%

Source: 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, SB Friedman

GOAL 4

Promote equitable public, private and philanthropic investment in Black and Latino community areas without displacement.

Private market lending in the form of home mortgages, business loans and real estate investment continues to be inequitably distributed. Between 2011 and 2017, Chicago's majority-white neighborhoods received nearly five times as much private investment per household compared to majority-Black neighborhoods and nearly three times more private investment per household than majority-Latino neighborhoods, according to a recent Urban Institute report. Some public and philanthropic investors have been deliberate in trying to bridge the investment gap, but their combined value is only 1/16th of private investment. The report also noted that private investment growth in neighborhoods of color is usually accompanied by gentrification or the influx of more affluent residents and businesses.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Create vibrant and stable neighborhoods that remain and become more affordable for existing residents and businesses.

4.2 Facilitate the creation of thriving commercial corridors in Black and Latino community areas.

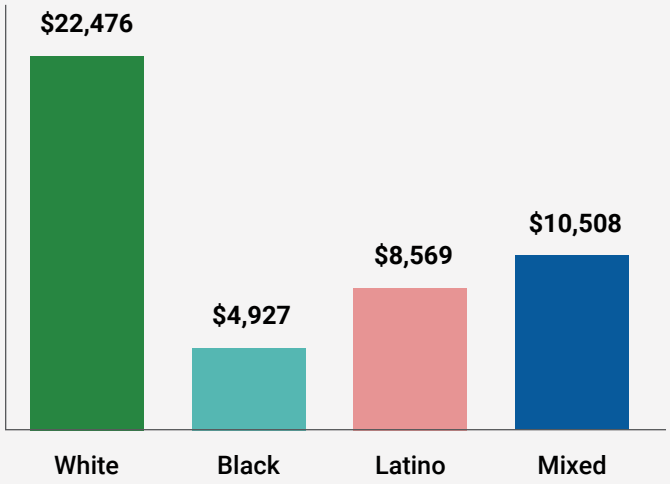
4.3 Enhance the public sector's toolkit of financial incentives for neighborhood economic development.

SUPPORTING DATA

Private investment in Chicago neighborhoods varies widely by race.

AVERAGE ANNUAL MARKET INVESTMENT PER HOUSEHOLD

(at Median) (2017 Dollars) (Chicago)



Source: CoreLogic, Community Reinvestment Act, Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, Record Information Services, Small Business Administration and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2012–16).

The median majority-white neighborhood received

4.6x as much private market investment per household as the median majority-Black neighborhood, and

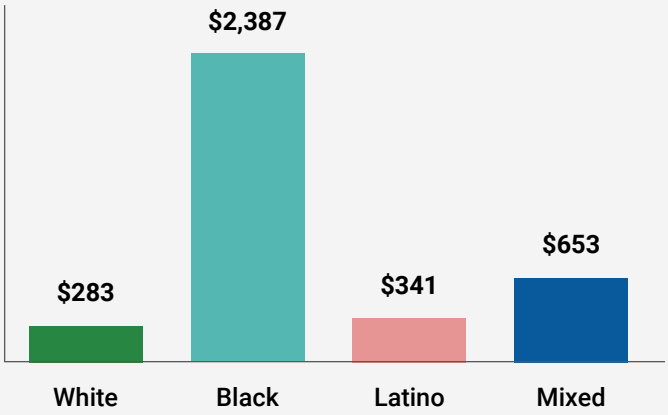
2.6x as much investment as the median majority-Latino neighborhood.

> *"I feel like the people who should be involved in economic development are the people in communities that are affected directly. Their voices should be at the table with this."*
>
> – Ashley Taylor | **Humboldt Park**

Public and mission-driven institutions invest significantly more per household in majority-Black neighborhoods.

AVERAGE ANNUAL MISSION AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT* PER HOUSEHOLD

(at Median) (2017 Dollars) (Chicago)



Note: Label refers to the majority race in the neighborhood.

**Mission and public investment refers to privately issued capital such as business loans, home mortgages and real estate investments.*

Source: CDFI Fund, Community Development Block Grants, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the HUD HOME program, HUD operating subsidies to public and assisted multifamily housing, HUD Choice Neighborhoods awards, Opportunity Finance Network, U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods awards and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2012–16)

GOAL 5

Promote Chicago's assets nationally and amplify positive narratives about South and West side neighborhoods.

Negative news reports of violence in national and local media can easily overshadow a neighborhood's positive attributes such as its rich history, strong sense of community, cultural and recreational attractions, thriving local businesses and untapped spending power. Most West and South side residents who participated in a recent University of Texas survey about news coverage in their neighborhoods indicated it was "too negative." Ongoing negative coverage perpetuates false perceptions of risk and biases that reinforce decades-long neighborhood disinvestment trends.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

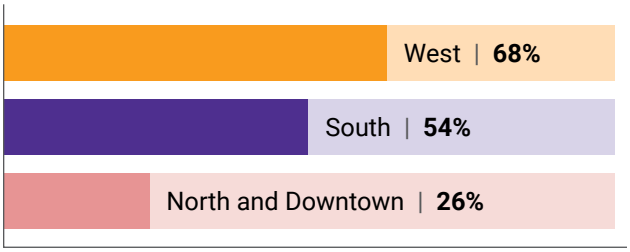
5.1 Change the narrative about Chicago's South and West side neighborhoods.

5.2 Promote South and West side neighborhood destinations to tourists and residents alike.

SUPPORTING DATA

Percentage who agree, "stories about my neighborhood are too negative"

2018, Chicago



Source: Van Duyn, Emily, Jennings, Jay, and Stroud, Natalie Jomini. (2018, January). Chicago news landscape. Center for Media Engagement.

> *"The best way [to] dispel negative South Side stereotypes is to have people come and see the neighborhood for themselves. Forty percent of Chicagoans are not from Chicago. They have to be educated."*
>
> – *Nedra Fears* | **The Greater Chatham Initiative, Executive Director**

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Economic Development** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 4 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY

Creating healthy and resilient neighborhoods for Chicagoans to thrive

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY

Chicago's "Urbs in Horto" motto— City in a Garden—is reflected in the many environmental resources and neighborhood assets that benefit both people and wildlife.

The city's 8,800-acre park system is considered one of the nation's most effective in terms of access, amenities and acreage, according to the Trust for Public Land. Meanwhile, the City's mass transit system provides comprehensive travel options, decreases traveler's reliance on cars and contributes to a high level of neighborhood walkability for most residents, according to national studies.

At the same time, environmental burdens that stem from decades of inequitable development patterns persist citywide, primarily in majority Black and Latino communities. These negative impacts include greater vulnerability to air pollution due to underlying health and social factors, increased flood risk, and higher than average neighborhood temperatures.

The Environment, Climate & Energy pillar aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase Chicago's resilience and preparedness for climate change and improve green spaces for the benefit of people and nature.

KEY TERMS

Climate Change	A change in global or regional climate patterns from the mid-20th century onwards that are largely attributed to increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
Climate Resiliency	The ability to anticipate, prepare for and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate. Improving climate resilience involves assessing how climate change will create new, or alter current, climate-related risks and taking steps to better cope with these risks.
Environmental Justice	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. (U.S. EPA)

> *"The data can tell us one thing about the inequitable distribution of amenities and burdens in our city right now... that was the product of conscious decisions about where to put resources and the only way to undo that is to make conscious decisions about putting resources different places now."*

– Rob Weinstock | **University of Chicago Law School, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law**

GOAL 1

Prioritize climate resiliency efforts in Black and Latino community areas and for low-income individuals through both public- and private-sector efforts.

Citywide strategies should be prioritized by neighborhood through geographic assessments of public health data, the availability of public resources, vulnerability to extreme weather events, energy efficiency and other factors that impact the resiliency and sustainability of local residents.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Ensure community input on development proposals, zoning, and permitting.

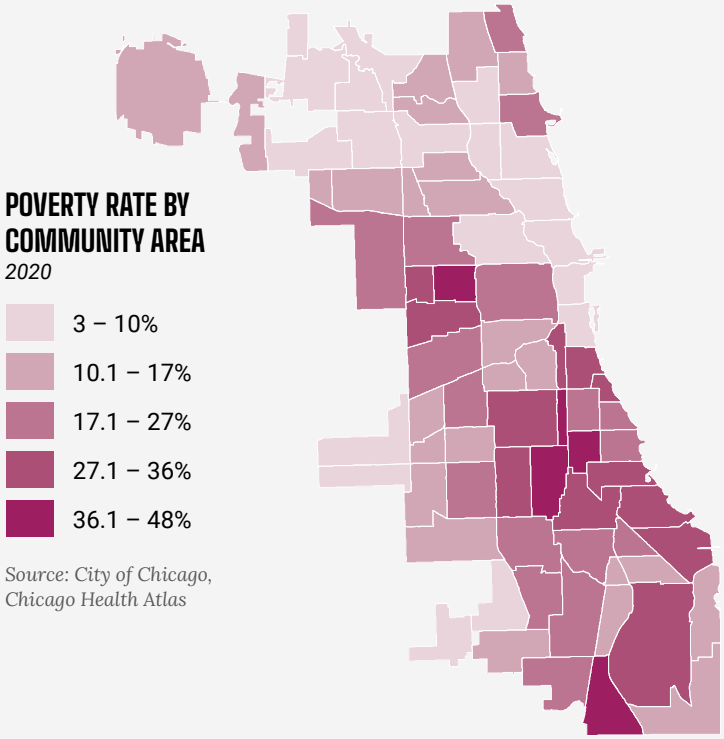
1.2 Establish and enforce climate, health, and environmental criteria and policies for development reviews.

1.3 Require decision makers to be transparent and provide community members access to environmental and scientific data used for decision-making.

1.4 Establish requirements for private sector participation and responsibility in climate resiliency efforts and control of neighborhood assets.

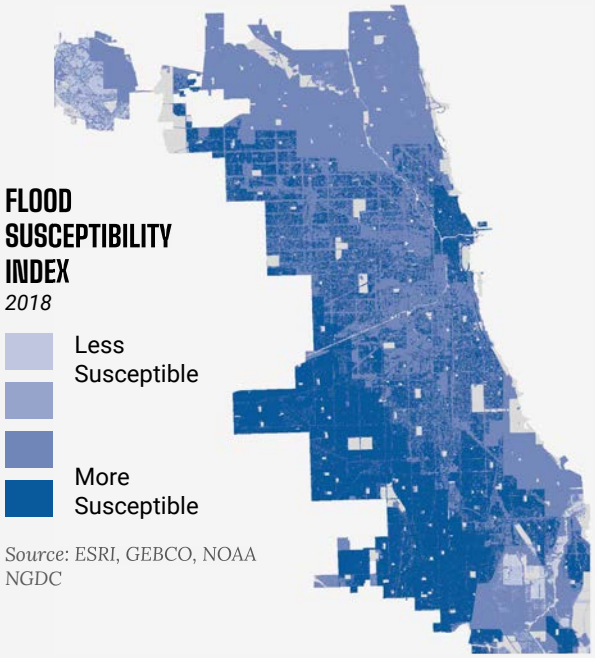
SUPPORTING DATA

Communities with the highest poverty rates are also among the most susceptible to flooding and hardships.



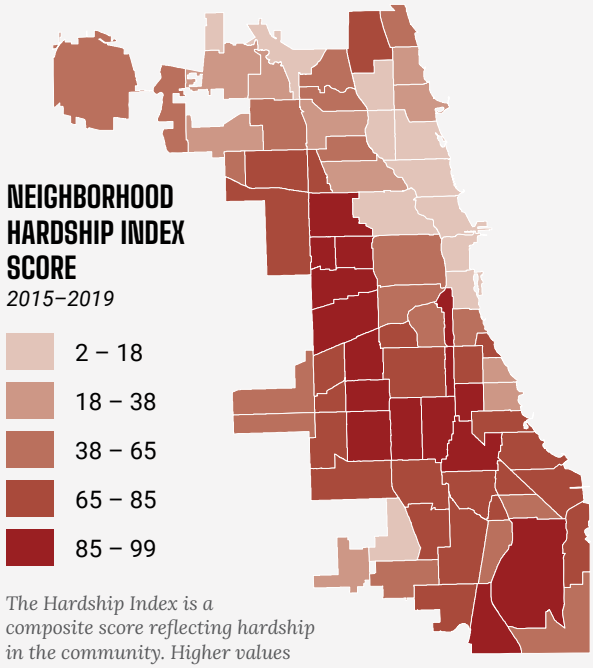
Source: City of Chicago, Chicago Health Atlas

Flood risk is higher on the South and West sides of the city.



Source: ESRI, GEBCO, NOAA NGDC

Community area hardship scores generally reflect their poverty rates.



The Hardship Index is a composite score reflecting hardship in the community. Higher values indicate greater hardship.

Source: Chicago Health Atlas

GOAL 2

Use environmental justice principles to establish criteria and policies for geographies harmed by environmental degradation.

Approximately half of Chicago's industrial businesses are located within 26 designated industrial corridors, with the remainder located in areas zoned for industry throughout the city. The effects associated with proximity to these businesses are currently inequitably distributed. The residential areas with the most significant exposures to industrial pollution are majority Black and Latino, especially within portions of the West, Southwest and Far South sides.

OBJECTIVES

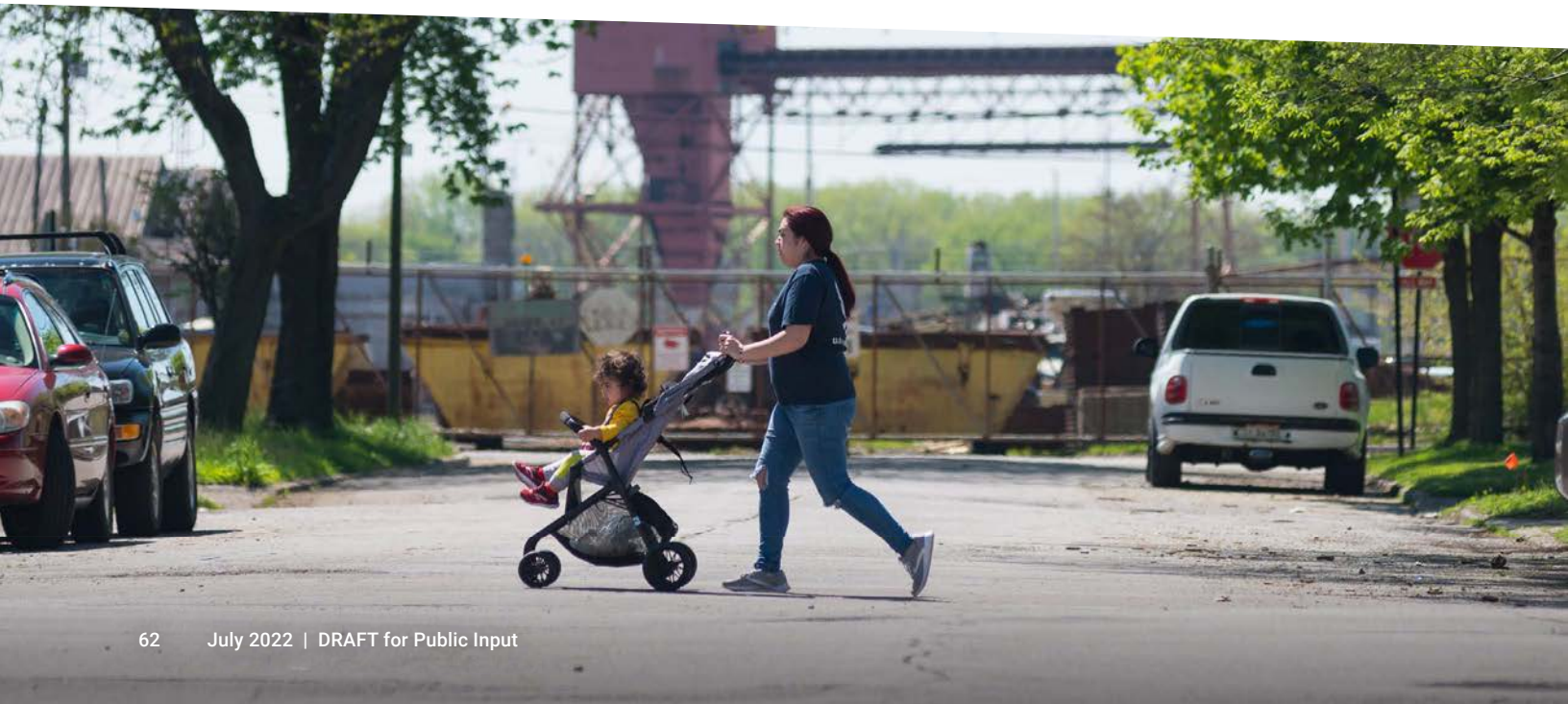
To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Incorporate opportunities for residents to be part of land-use planning for their neighborhoods.

2.2 Ensure community organizations have tools and resources to address the climate crisis.

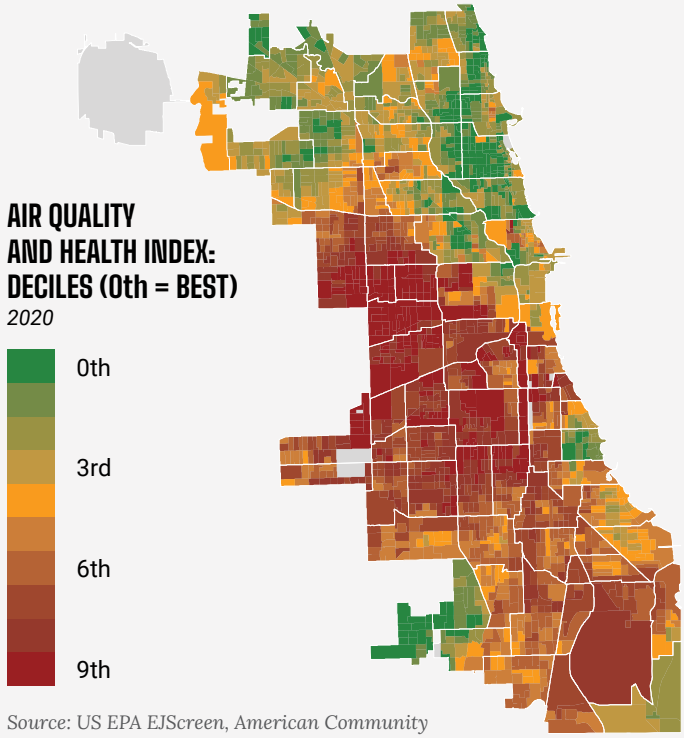
2.3 Establish a process to identify, inventory and determine the value of historic disinvestment, inequitable policy and negative health impacts on residents.

2.4 Conduct a cumulative impact assessment and establish targets for positive outcomes in communities that are environmentally overburdened.



SUPPORTING DATA

The South and West sides of the City are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution.



Source: US EPA EJScreen, American Community Survey, US CDC 500 Cities, IDPH Vital Statistics, Various Years combined, 2011-2018

The Air Quality + Health Index combines community-level data on

AIR POLLUTION WITH HEALTH AND SOCIAL FACTORS

that identify areas that are most likely to experience negative impacts.

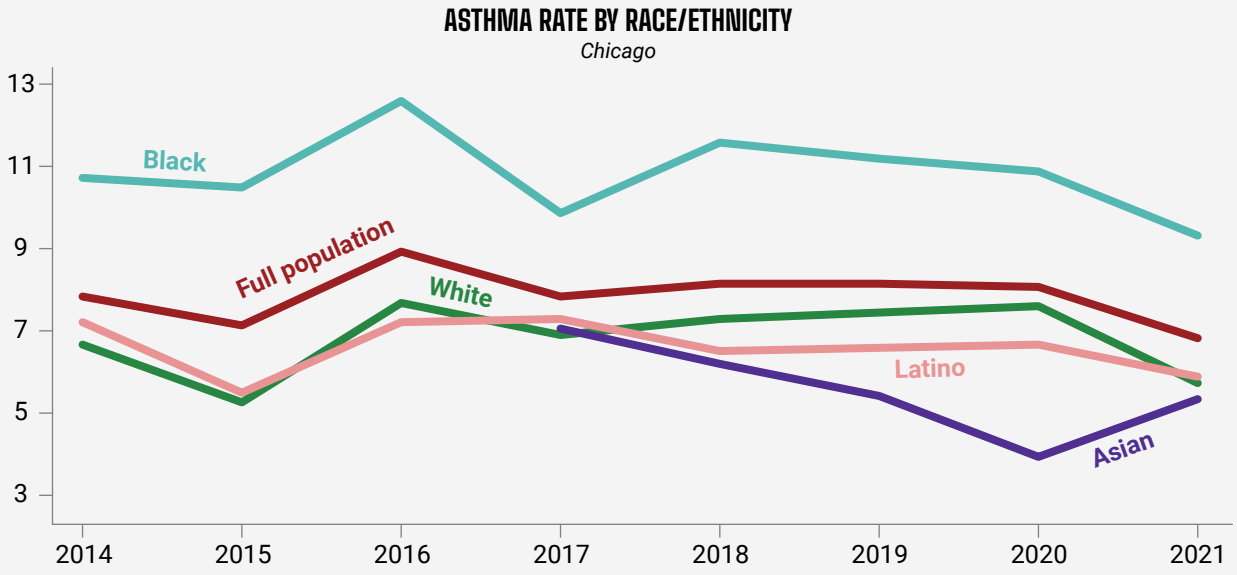
Census tracts in green

ARE LESS VULNERABLE,

while tracts in red

ARE MORE VULNERABLE.

Black residents have higher rates of asthma than any other race group.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas

GOAL 3

Foster public and private partnerships to reduce waste and encourage the reuse of materials, locally produced goods, services and energy.

Despite campaigns designed to encourage residents and businesses to recycle, Chicago's recycling rate as a percentage of total waste was recently estimated at less than 9%, compared to rates exceeding 75% in cities like Los Angeles. More circular economic practices, where goods are produced, shipped, used and recycled within relatively short distances, can benefit all Chicagoans.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Create cross-sector partnerships with racially diverse businesses to increase the City's waste reduction and diversion rates and leverage its buying power.

3.2 Establish contract requirements for the removal and disposal of materials from supply and waste chains.

3.3 Establish a community education curriculum that raises awareness about materials and waste handling.

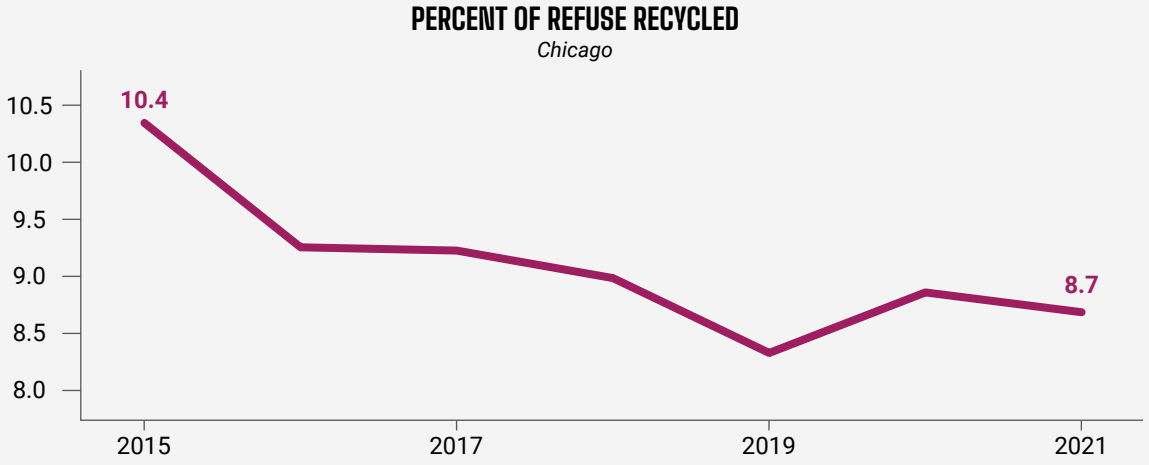
3.4 Implement and support the development of urban agriculture.

3.5 Facilitate renewable energy generation and distribution including reuse and recycling.

3.6 Create development codes for new building technologies as they arise and prioritize the reuse of materials in construction.

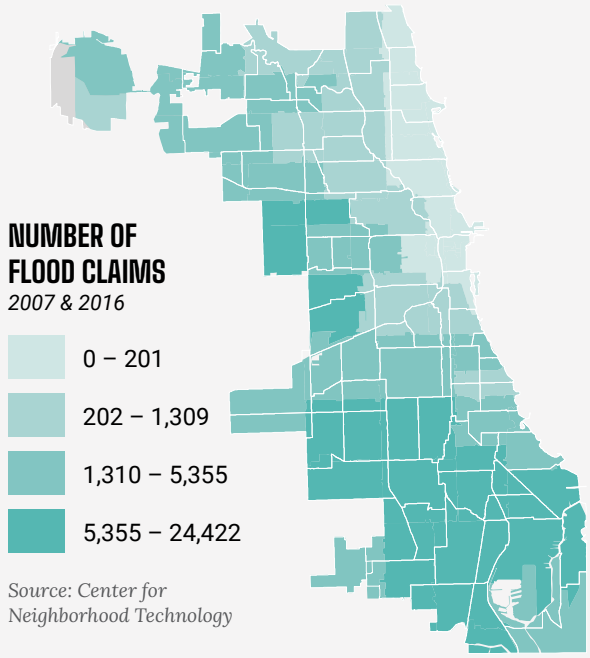
SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's recycling rate is generally declining.



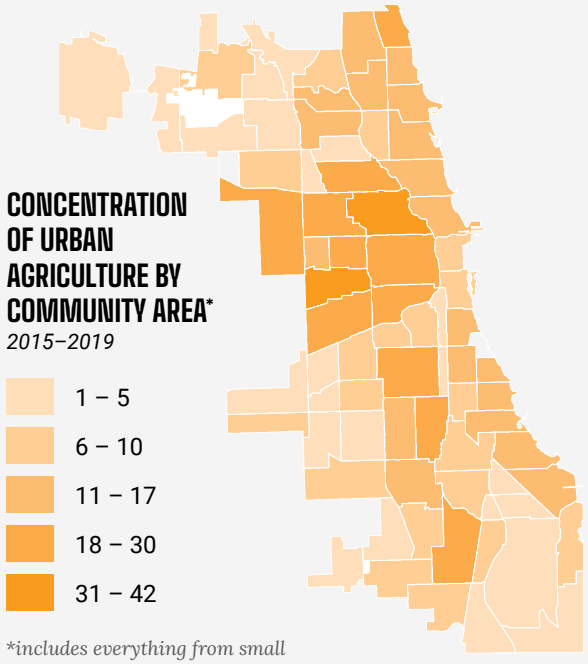
Source: City of Chicago

87% of flood claims are paid in Black and Latino communities.



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

Urban agriculture sites are located citywide.



**includes everything from small residential gardens to commercial urban farms*

Source: Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project

GOAL 4

Maintain and expand green space, natural resources, and conservation efforts for the benefit of all Chicagoans.

With virtually all Chicagoans living within a 10-minute walk to a park, the city has ample existing open space resources that are known to improve personal mental and physical health. The benefits are partly offset by the City's ever-diminishing tree canopy coverage which, at 16%, is two-thirds the average coverage of other U.S. cities. Climate change compels us to restore our natural assets, particularly in communities with the most vulnerability to extreme heat and weather incidents, and protect and steward our freshwater resources for future generations.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Invest in land restoration and stewardship, especially in neighborhoods with existing environmental burdens.

4.2 Acquire open space and provide equitable and improved access across the city.

4.3 Maximize the use of native plants in preserves, parks and parkways.

4.4 Invest in the expansion of Chicago's urban tree canopy.

4.5 Create open space or corridor easements around industrial zones.

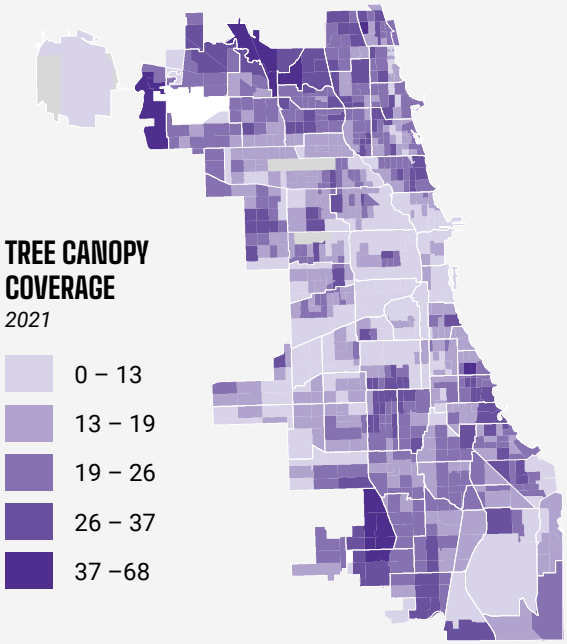
4.6 Require infrastructure to be designed and built sustainably with public access for people of all abilities.

4.7 Protect Chicago's freshwater resources as the climate changes.

4.8 Work with Indigenous leaders to protect and support indigenous land stewardship principles.

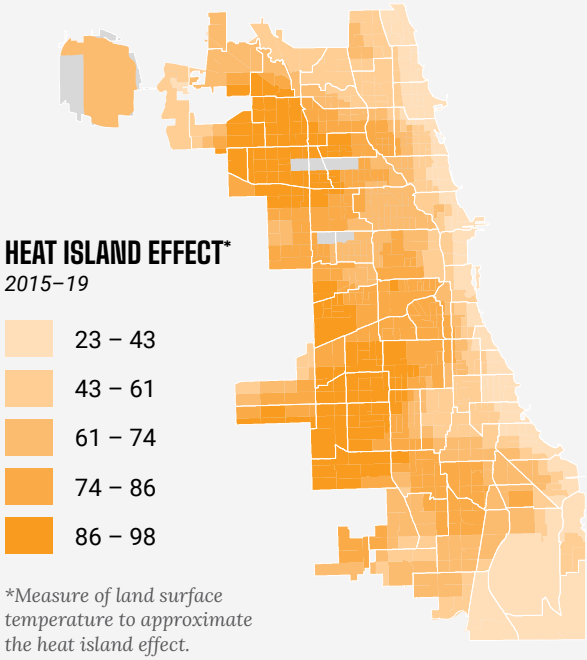
SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's tree canopy continues to decrease, especially in Far North and Far South neighborhoods.



Source: Compiled by the University of Chicago Healthy Regions and Policies Lab, with support from the Partnership for Healthy Cities in partnership with the University of Chicago Center for Spatial Data Science and the Chicago Department of Public Health

Chicago's surface temperatures are highest on the Northwest and Southwest sides.



**Measure of land surface temperature to approximate the heat island effect.*

Source: Compiled by the University of Chicago Healthy Regions and Policies Lab, with support from the Partnership for Healthy Cities in partnership with the University of Chicago Center for Spatial Data Science and the Chicago Department of Public Health

> *"We also need to discuss bridging the gap between labor and environmental justice—that's a big issue for our group and probably many others here."*
>
> – Martha Torrez Allen | **Southeast Side Coalition to Ban Petcoke, Co-Chair**

GOAL 5

Mitigate and eliminate sources of carbon emissions in alignment with national and global climate goals.

70% of Chicago emissions come from buildings, so the City must eliminate harmful fossil fuels, retrofit existing buildings, design new buildings to the highest efficiency standards, expand renewable energy, and implement savings opportunities for cost-burdened households. Buildings must designed to minimize their impacts and enable green infrastructure, native landscaping, and trees to alleviate urban heat islands and flood damage. Finally, the City must equitably advance housing near transit, to provide increased access and lower emissions from car trips.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

5.1 Significantly reduce the ongoing impact of climate change in our neighborhoods.

5.2 Plan for green infrastructure that reduces the overall carbon impact of the city in public and private development.

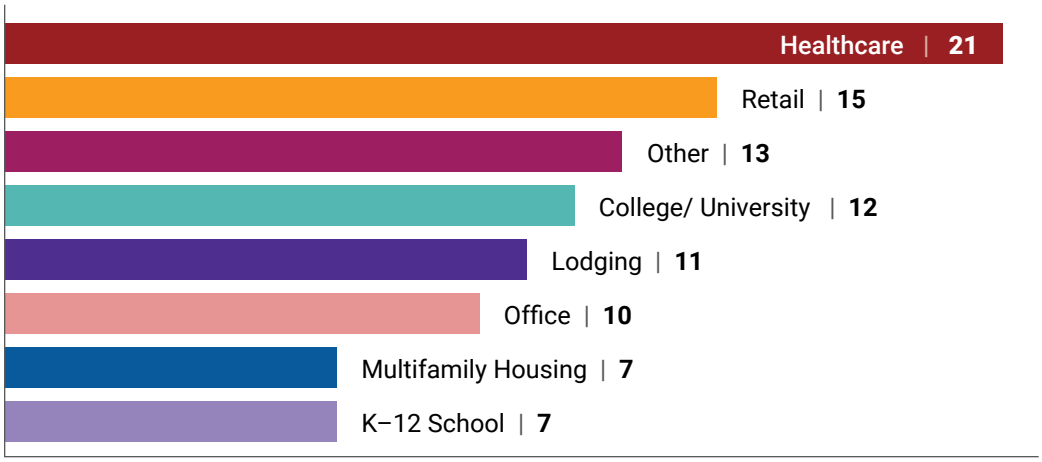
5.3 Expand transit infrastructure as a climate mitigation strategy, especially in Black and Latino community areas.

SUPPORTING DATA

Greenhouse gas emissions vary widely by building uses.

MEDIAN GREENHOUSE GAS INTENSITY BY BUILDING USE

2016–20, Chicago, GHG Emissions Intensity (kg CO2e/square foot)



Source: Chicago Energy Benchmarking Report, 2020

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Environment, Climate & Energy** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 5 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Ensuring that every Chicago neighborhood is safe, inclusive, and vibrant, has healthy, affordable and accessible housing, and connects residents to what they need to thrive

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Chicagoans live in vastly different and segregated neighborhoods with disparate housing conditions, unequal neighborhood amenities, and uneven access to opportunity.

Decades of discriminatory and racist housing practices have made Chicago's Black-white homeownership gap the largest among the nation's 10 biggest metropolitan areas, according to the Urban Institute. Though most blatantly discriminatory housing practices have been outlawed, inequities continue due to insufficient enforcement, a history of disinvestment and legacies of structurally racist policies. Mortgage denials for Chicago homes are twice as high for Black residents as for white residents, according to 2019 Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data obtained through the Woodstock Institute. According to WBEZ from 2012-2018, 68.1% of mortgage loans went to majority-white neighborhoods, while just 8.1% went to majority-black and 8.7% to majority-Latino neighborhoods.

Other ongoing challenges facing many Chicagoans, especially in communities of color, include housing affordability — nearly one in four Chicago households spends more than half its income on housing costs — and food access, with 40% of Chicago parents living in community areas with limited access to grocery stores, according to a Chicago Department of Public Health survey.

The Housing and Neighborhood pillar's goals are intended to ensure that every resident is able to live in a stable, quality home and that every neighborhood has diverse, affordable and accessible housing options with access to transit, well-paying jobs, an array of amenities and needed services.

KEY TERMS

Displacement	When existing residents and businesses can no longer afford rising housing costs in their neighborhood and are forced to move to another neighborhood.
Gentrification	When neighborhood housing costs increase and neighborhood character changes due to the influx of new residents that are wealthier than existing residents.
Historically Marginalized	Groups who have experienced discrimination and exclusion due to race, age, immigration status, income, family size, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, legal history or other statuses

> *"If we want to.... stop repeating these cycles of 'oh let's look at this problem' and apply a band aid, we have to really get to the root cause... that's the only chance we have of truly eliminating the segregation, the disinvestment. But we have to be really brave to face those root causes. The data will not give us that, and those lived experiences will."*
>
> – Linda Young | **Volunteer**

GOAL 1

Preserve and increase affordable, quality and accessible housing choices for all.

Households burdened with high housing costs have less money for health care, food, transportation and other basic needs. Shifts in available housing impact residents across the City. From 2013 to 2019, new development has resulted in over 23,000 units in large apartment buildings, yet nearly 12,000 units in 2–4 flats have been lost due to demolition or conversion to single-family homes. Likewise, households with disabilities face limited options for accessible housing with affordable rents and near accessible infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES

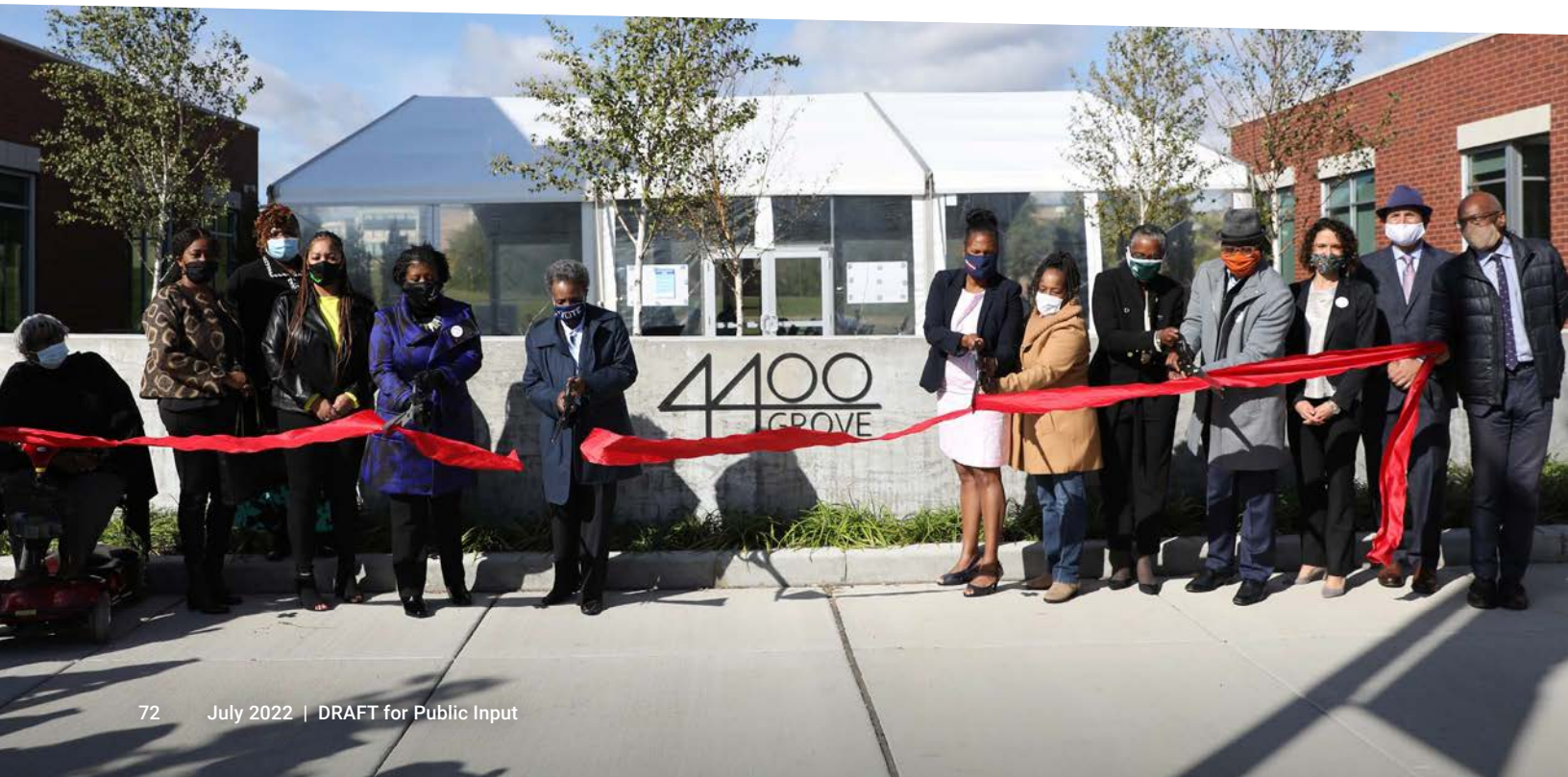
To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Preserve and maintain existing affordable housing across all 77 community areas.

1.2 Develop a wide range of housing units affordable to residents at all incomes in all 77 community areas.

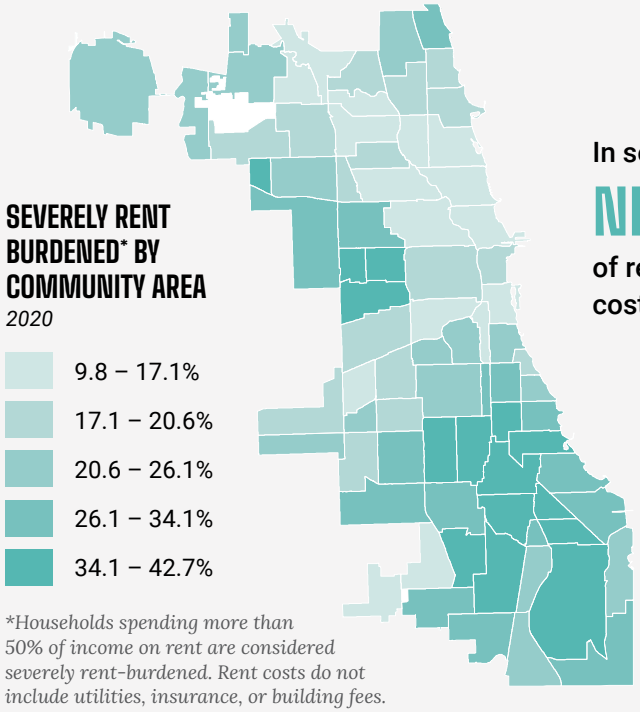
1.3 Expand housing assistance for marginalized residents, especially very low-income residents and people with disabilities.

1.4 Ensure housing is accessible for people with disabilities or can be adapted to meet their needs.



SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's most rent-burdened households are concentrated on the South and West sides



*Households spending more than 50% of income on rent are considered severely rent-burdened. Rent costs do not include utilities, insurance, or building fees.

Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

In some community areas,

NEARLY 50%

of renters are severely cost-burdened

Chicago continues to lose rental units in smaller buildings due to demolitions and conversions to single-family homes.

CHANGE IN NUMBER OF RENTAL BUILDING TYPES

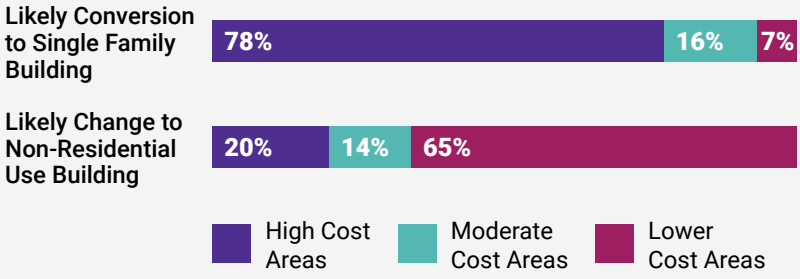
2012–2019, Chicago

BUILDING TYPES (RENTAL)	CHANGE (2012–2019)
Single-Unit	-1,200
2–4 Units	-14,400
5–49 Units	-600
50+ Units	+23,300

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, IHS at DePaul University

DISTRIBUTION OF MINOR CLASS CHANGES FOR 2-4 UNIT PROPERTIES BY NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET TYPE

2013–2019, Chicago



Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates, IHS at DePaul University

GOAL 2

Prevent Chicagoans from being involuntarily displaced, especially those that have been historically marginalized.

Rent and property tax increases, along with stagnant wages, are primary causes for the displacement of marginalized residents. In 2020, South and West Side community areas continued to have the lowest rates of new mortgage activity, pointing to the challenges that residents face in accessing homeownership and land ownership. Chicago's inequitable housing displacement trends are additionally reflected by eviction filings that are six times higher in majority-Black community areas and two times higher in majority-Latino areas than in majority-white areas.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Support and increase homeownership for Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant residents.

2.2 Increase community ownership opportunities and options for Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant residents to collectively own land and properties.

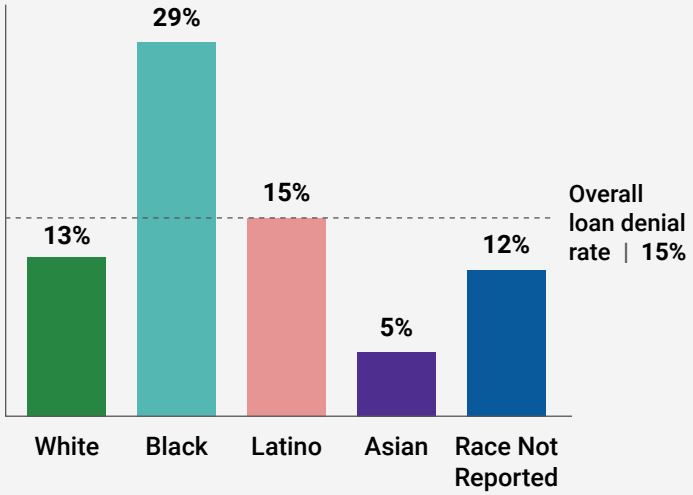
2.3 Increase protections for residents and institutions in neighborhoods with rising rents and property values.

SUPPORTING DATA

Home purchase lending denials continue to be concentrated in Black and Latino neighborhoods.

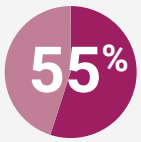
MORTGAGE LOAN DENIAL BY RACE

2019, Chicago

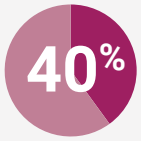


Source: Woodstock Institute, HMDA

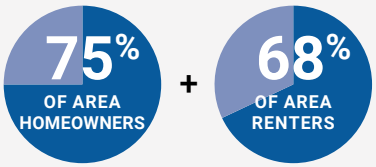
Property taxes are a concern for renters and homeowners.



of Chicagoans are concerned about their property taxes, compared to



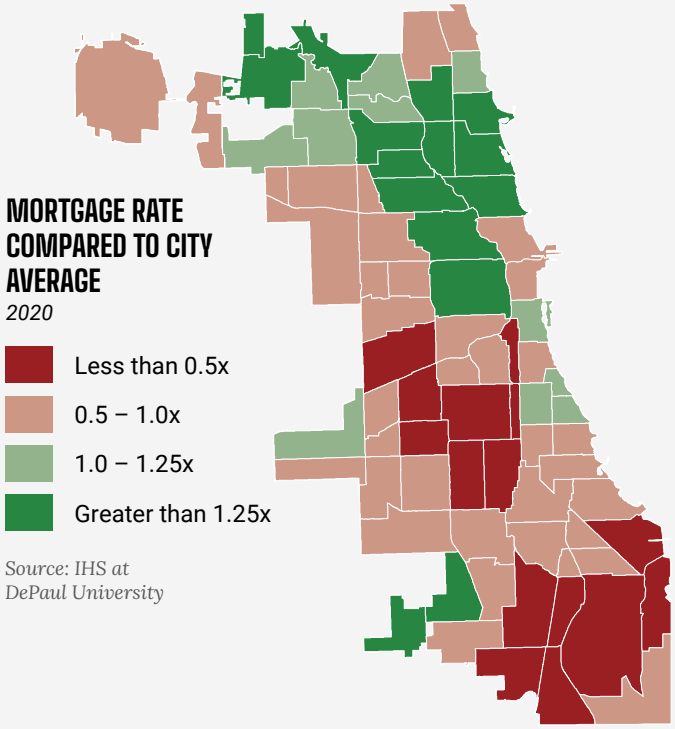
of adults in other U.S. cities that are concerned about their property taxes.



believe Chicago property taxes are worse than other cities

Source: The Harris Poll

Local mortgage activity largely reflects community income and gentrification trends.



Source: IHS at DePaul University

NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE HIGHEST MORTGAGE RATE COMPARED TO CITY AVERAGE

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE
North Center	2.08x
West Town	2.01x
Logan Square	1.76x
Edison Park	1.66x
Forest Glen	1.57x

NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE LOWEST MORTGAGE RATE COMPARED TO CITY AVERAGE

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE
Riverdale	0.068x
South Deering	0.25x
West Englewood	0.26x
South Lawndale	0.35x
Fuller Park	0.35x

GOAL 3

Attract and retain residents and increase density to strengthen neighborhood vibrancy, especially on the South and West sides.

Many aspects of a neighborhood's desirability are proportionate to its population and density. Since the 1950s, discriminatory housing practices and disinvestment matched with preferential benefits for white families contributed to Chicago's loss of nearly one million residents. This has resulted in less neighborhood vitality and more abandoned or distressed properties—including 10,000 vacant city-owned lots heavily concentrated in majority Black communities. Other policies also limit opportunities for inclusive neighborhood growth and affordability and reinforce racial and socioeconomic segregation, such as a preponderance of residential zoning that exclusively permits the construction of single-family homes.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Update the City's rules and regulations to support increased equitable development.

3.2 Focus future growth and density in and around transit hubs, key commercial corridors and/or anchors.

3.3 Prioritize redevelopment of vacant land and buildings.

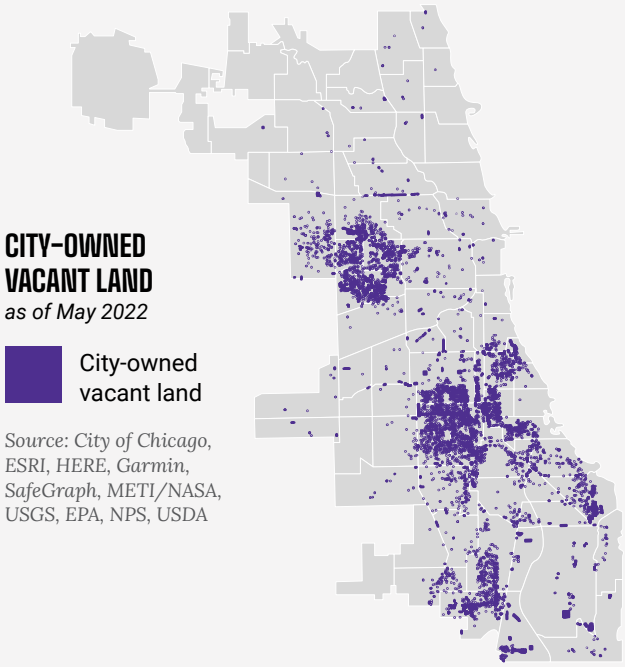
3.4 Create, strengthen and anchor neighborhood-based developers, especially those that are small or medium sized and led by Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant owners.

3.5 Enhance public spaces, schools, parks, services and public infrastructure in underserved communities.

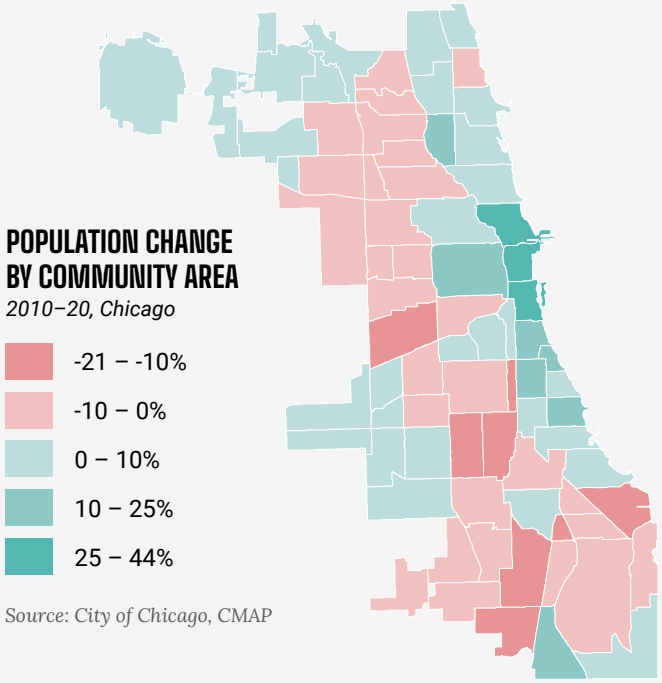
SUPPORTING DATA

> *"I have seen lots of rundown homes on the South and West sides and people are living there because that's what they can afford. I'd love to see homes that people can live in with dignity, in neighborhoods that have well-funded schools and where children can play safely. We need to be safe in our neighborhoods."*
>
> — Chevon | **East Lakeview**

The City of Chicago owns more than 10,000 vacant lots.



Nearly half of Chicago's community areas lost population in the previous decade.



NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE MOST POPULATION CHANGE

2010–20, Chicago

NEIGHBORHOOD	POPULATION CHANGE
Englewood	-20.50%
West Englewood	-16.50%
Burnside	-13.34%
Roseland	-13.01%
Oakland	+14.89%
Near West Side	+23.69%
Near North Side	+31.06%
Near South Side	+34.62%
The Loop	+44.45%

GOAL 4

Invest in Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant community areas to create safe, healthy and livable neighborhoods that provide basic needs, amenities, services and jobs.

Black and Latino residents are less likely to report feeling like a part of their neighborhoods than white residents, according to data collected from the Healthy Chicago Survey. These sentiments are likely due in part to diminished retail corridors, recent school closures, limited access to healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food options and a history of disinvestment and exclusion, among other causes.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Increase access to healthy food and health care in Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant community areas.

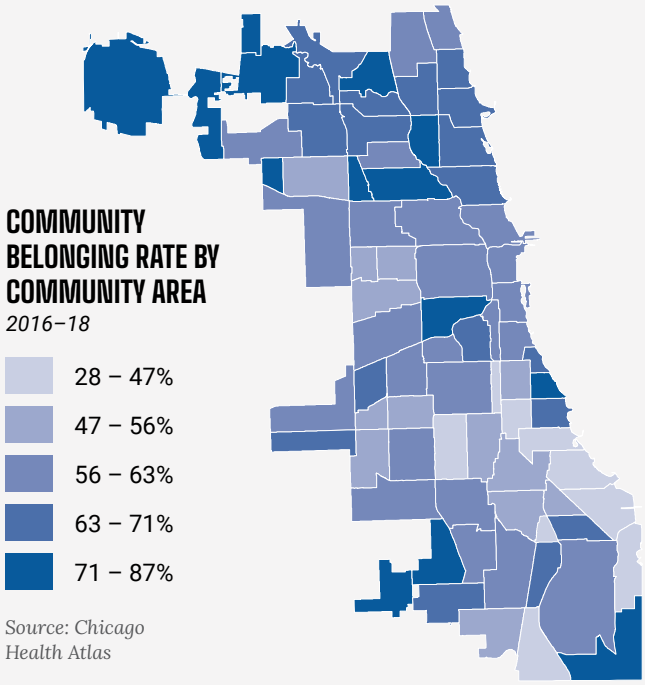
4.2 Support existing and grow new locally-owned neighborhood businesses.

4.3 Create a welcoming environment to foster a stronger sense of belonging in all 77 community areas, especially for youth and older residents.

4.4 Strengthen community-based organizations in all 77 community areas.

SUPPORTING DATA

Feeling of community belonging varies widely by community area.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas

COMMUNITY BELONGING RATE BY RACE OR ETHNICITY

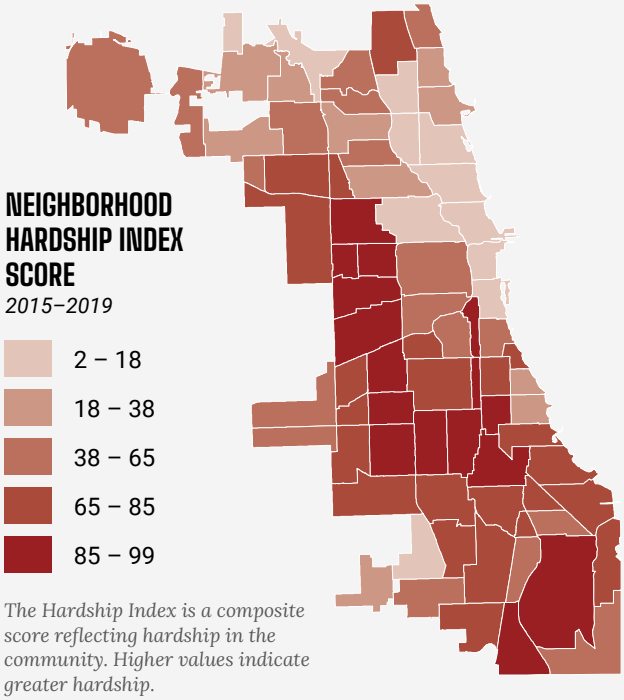
2020, Chicago

RACE OR ETHNICITY	RATE
White	51%
Black	46%
Asian	40%
Latino	42%
Citywide Average	46%

Source: Chicago Health Atlas, 2020

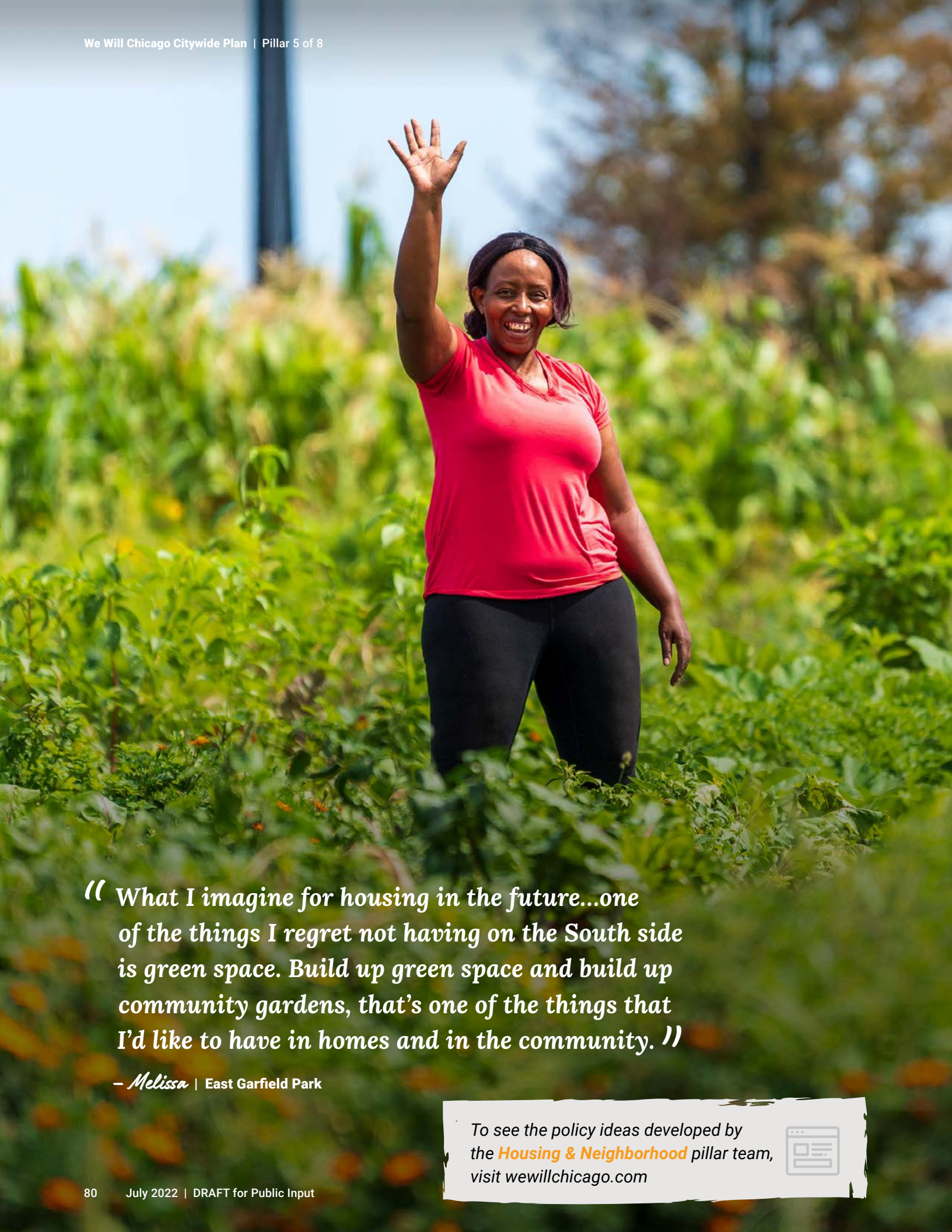
> *"We have to think about preservation. More times than not when we get a new building, we get new neighbors. There's always a question of what happened to the families that were already there."*
>
> — Dalia Aragon | North River Commission, Economic Development and Housing Coordinator

Long-term disinvestment has led to high levels of hardship, especially on the South and West sides.



The Hardship Index is a composite score reflecting hardship in the community. Higher values indicate greater hardship.

Source: Chicago Health Atlas



"What I imagine for housing in the future...one of the things I regret not having on the South side is green space. Build up green space and build up community gardens, that's one of the things that I'd like to have in homes and in the community."

– *Melissa* | **East Garfield Park**

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Housing & Neighborhood** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 6 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

LIFELONG LEARNING

Ensuring that learning opportunities exist for Chicagoans at every stage of life

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

LIFELONG LEARNING

Learning that lasts a lifetime helps people to continually improve themselves for work, recreation and other personal or social pursuits that contribute to strong communities.

With approximately two-thirds of Illinois jobs reportedly requiring at least some post-secondary schooling or special training, formal education is a key predictor for an individual's income potential. College graduates, for example, earn 65% more on average than high school graduates, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Education in all its forms is important to individual well-being, personal growth and mental health. Education can take place in a variety of formats and locations that cater to the unique needs of Chicago's population, especially seniors and others with physical or technological challenges that limit access to continuing education opportunities.

Lifelong learning enables Chicagoans to set and reach goals for themselves and their families, which strengthens the vitality of entire neighborhoods. Through formal and informal learning, Chicagoans can unlock talents and skills, learn from collective history and prepare future generations to be change-makers for a more resilient and equitable world.

The Lifelong Learning pillar's goals seek to strengthen residents' pathways into the workforce and enhance educational collaborations that benefit all age groups.

KEY TERMS

Digitalization	The conversion of text, images, sound and other information into a digital format that can be processed by computers.
Formal and Informal Learning	Educational activity resulting from attendance at formal schools and institutions with established programming, as well as experiences attained through social endeavors, hobbies, activities, personal pursuits and other casual endeavors that enhance personal awareness, knowledge and ability.
Intergenerational Encounters	Opportunities for individuals of different generations or ages to come together
Postsecondary Education	All formal education including technical training and vocational programs with degree and non-degrees that lead to certificates and diplomas that foster individual growth, career pathways that reduce poverty, and increase prosperity.

> *"I don't think any positive change in the city is possible without equal, fair access to higher learning. Education is the first platform in knowing how to determine what is healthy and unhealthy."*

– Kilroy Watkins | **West Side of Chicago**

GOAL 1

Support increased awareness, interest and belonging to learning resources accessible to all Chicagoans at all stages of life regardless of race, gender, income level, age, ability, citizenship status and language proficiency.

Educational services provided by Chicago's many public and private institutions would benefit from increased coordination that addresses the city's evolving workforce needs and the diverse interests of residents.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Create a Department or Office of Learning within the City to improve collaboration between citywide education-focused organizations and share learning opportunities available to the public.

1.2 Leverage informal learning to create pathways toward more formal educational opportunities.

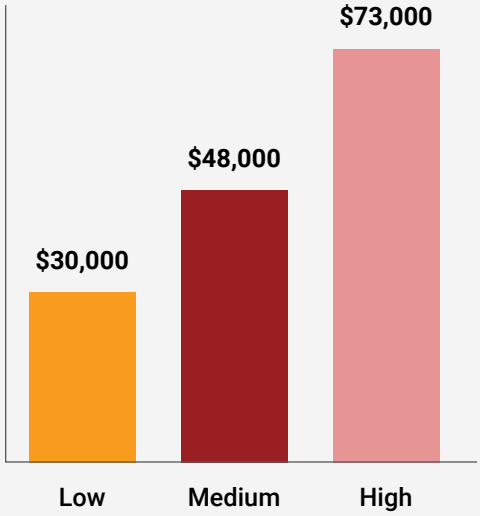
1.3 Develop an accessible citywide awareness campaign to promote the importance of and opportunities for lifelong learning.

SUPPORTING DATA

Digital skills continue to correlate with expanded employment options and higher wage levels.

MEAN ANNUAL WAGE BY DIGITALIZATION LEVEL

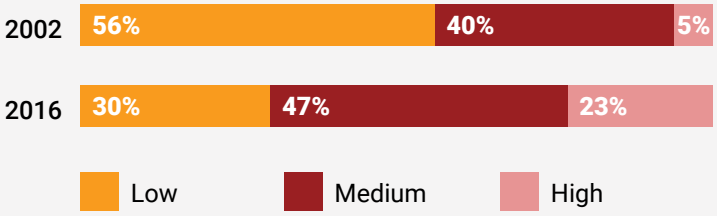
2016, U.S.



Source: Information Technology and Innovation Foundation

EMPLOYMENT BY LEVELS OF DIGITALIZATION

U.S.



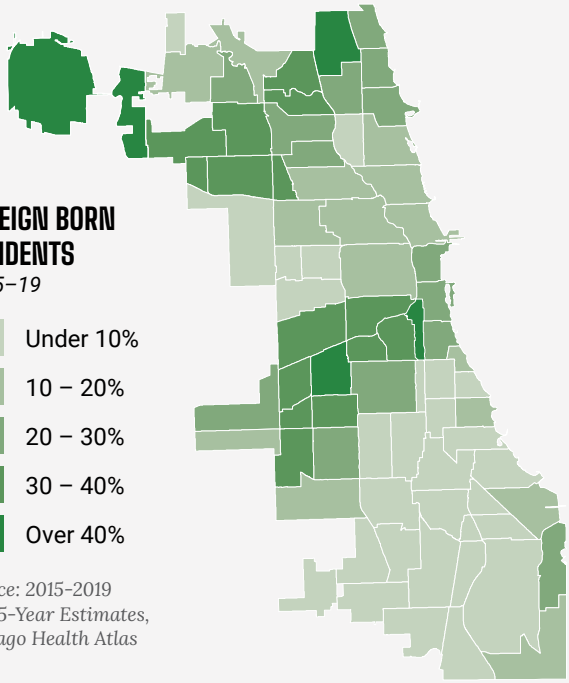
1 IN 3

working-age Americans possess limited digital skills.

1 IN 6

working-age Americans are unable to use email, web search and other basic online tools.

Many Chicagoans have limited English proficiency.



Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

21% of Chicago residents are foreign born.

8% of Chicago residents have limited English proficiency.*

**"Limited English proficiency" is defined as residents 5 years and older who do not speak English "very well"*

GOAL 2

Create new sustainable educational pathways to the workforce, especially for Black and Latino residents and those negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.

In 2017, more than 25% of Black youth and about 13% of Latino youth between the ages of 16-24 were out of work and out of school, compared to 5% of white youth, according to the Great Cities Institute. Unemployment rates for formerly incarcerated individuals is five times the rate of people who have never been to jail or prison, a Prison Policy Initiative report found.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Strengthen and expand job training programs that provide employment opportunities after completion.

2.2 Strengthen the capacity of workforce training programs and partnerships for people negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.

2.3 Remove barriers and constraints to participating in the workforce and accessing good quality jobs.

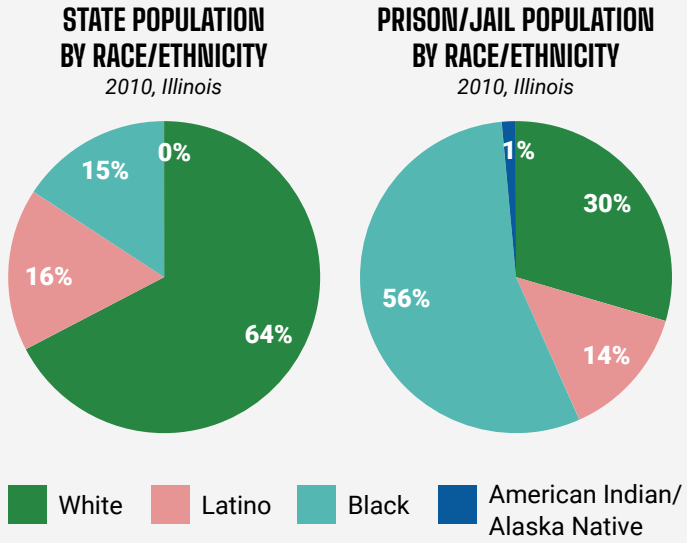
2.4 Align educational providers and key employers to create well-supported workforce pipelines.

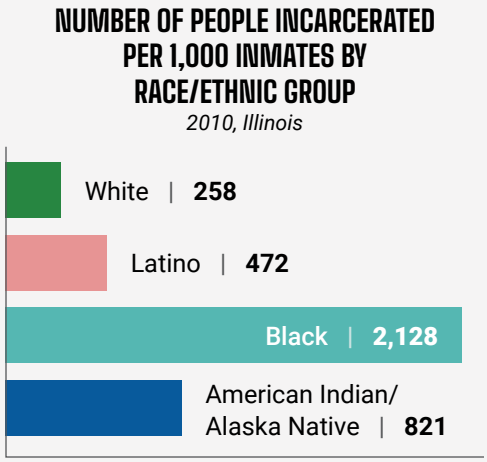
2.5 Reduce the financial burden of participating in workforce training programs.

2.6 Expand equitable access to small business development, incubation and other business-led learning opportunities.

SUPPORTING DATA

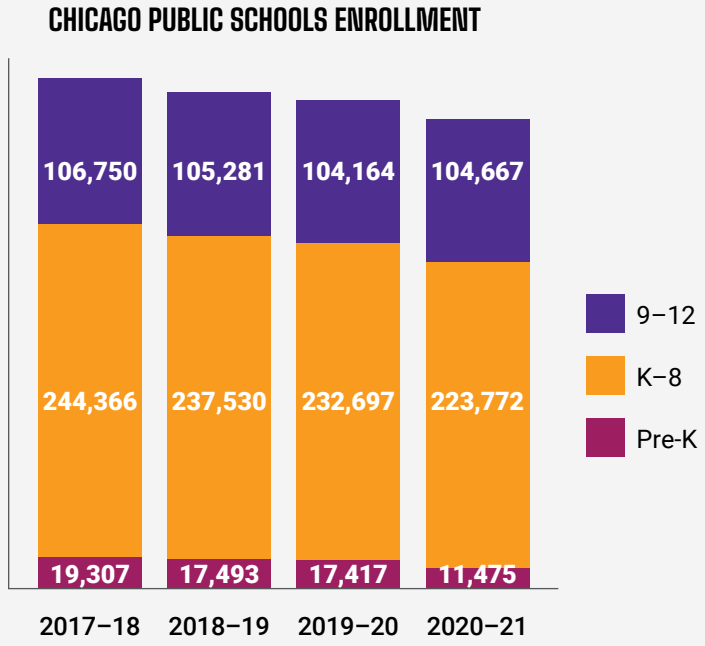
Illinois prisons disproportionately house Black inmates.





Source: Prison Policy Initiative, Illinois State Profile

CPS enrollment has declined for all age levels since 2017.



Source: Chicago Public Schools ARA Dashboard

> *"While we are talking about job readiness and training, are we also talking about job availability, specifically those with a living wage? I'm just curious about placement and career sustainability after the formal and informal pathways have been taken."*
>
> – Rebecca Amato | Illinois Humanities, Director of Teaching and Learning

GOAL 3

Build on existing programs to create opportunities for learning and personal growth.

Initiatives to support students with postsecondary educational plans can help reduce racial disparities involving high school and college graduation rates, especially through collaborations with community-based organizations that are already providing social services to future and current workforce members.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Identify effective programs throughout the City and expand access to all neighborhoods.

3.2 Sustain and expand the work of programs and programming in Black, immigrant, Indigenous, Latino and low-income communities.

3.3 Expand existing programs to accommodate individuals across the lifespan and with different abilities.

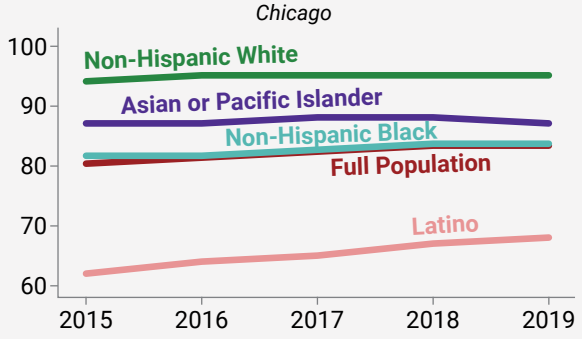
3.4 Bridge the reach and impact of collaborations between Chicago Public Schools and higher education programs.

SUPPORTING DATA

The graduation rates of Chicago students decreases more than 50% between high school and college.

FOUR-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE (%)

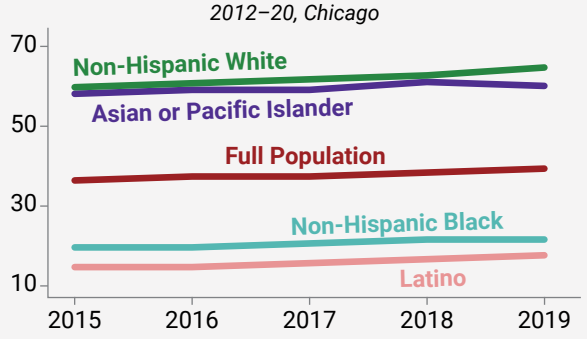
Chicago



Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE GRADUATION RATE (%)

2012–20, Chicago



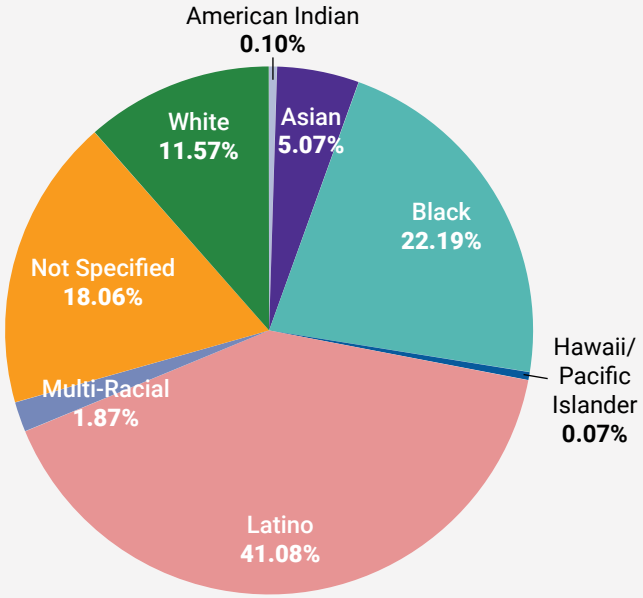
Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

> *"We really ought to be calling out specifically our commitment to public education in our objectives and naming CPS as a critical institution in the city as a provider of lifelong learning."*
>
> – Mark Potter | **City Colleges of Chicago, Provost and Chief Academic Officer**

Chicago City Colleges enrollment reflects the city's racial and ethnic diversity.

CITY COLLEGE OF CHICAGO ENROLLMENT BY ETHNICITY

2021



Source: City Colleges of Chicago

GOAL 4

Elevate existing support systems to increase formal and informal learning opportunities.

Single parents, seniors, recent immigrants and people with disabilities can all benefit from multiple supportive resources that improve their abilities to pursue education and training.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Promote and strengthen opportunities for intergenerational encounters to build skills and building community.

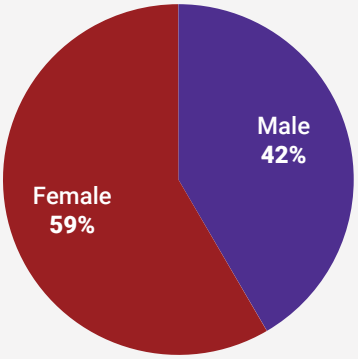
4.2 Increase support for and remove barriers to accessing childcare and older adult care.

4.3 Address inequities in pay and resources for educators and care professionals.

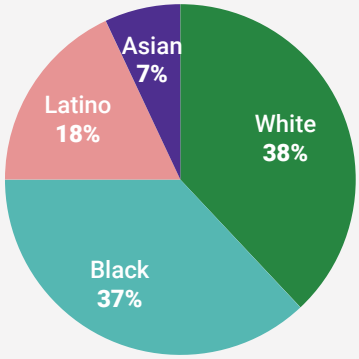
SUPPORTING DATA

Demographics of Chicago residents aged 65 years or more

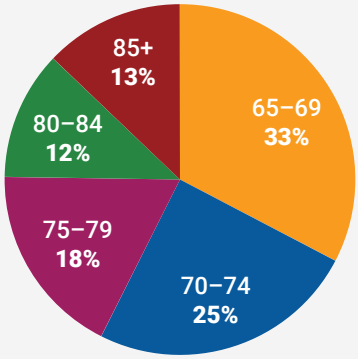
GENDER
2019, Chicago



RACE/ETHNICITY
2019, Chicago



AGES
2019, Chicago



Source: Healthy Chicago Databook, Older Adult Health

Many communities' single-parent households are at least three times city averages.

SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS BY CITY AREA
2015–19, Chicago

AREA	SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLD (%)
Riverdale	36%
Washington Park	25%
Oakland	24%
Greater Grand Crossing	24%
South Deering	23%
West Garfield Park	22%
North Lawndale	22%
East Garfield Park	20%
Humboldt Park	17%
South Chicago	17%
City of Chicago Average	7%

Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

Select communities' preschool enrollment rates are a fraction of city averages.

PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY CITY AREA
2015–19, Chicago

AREA	PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT (%)
Avalon Park	19%
West Lawn	25%
West Elsdon	27%
Hegewisch	32%
Archer Heights	34%
Gage Park	37%
Hermosa	37%
Auburn Gresham	38%
Brighton Park	40%
Englewood	40%
City of Chicago Average	58%

Source: 2015-2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

GOAL 5

Expand the availability and access to spaces for lifelong learning in Black, immigrant, Indigenous and Latino community areas.

Nearly 20% of Chicago's 77 community areas don't have a public high school, according to the location of current CPS schools. The collective population of the impacted neighborhoods consists of nearly a quarter million people. This lack of access is most pronounced in the West and South sides where school closures in the 2010s deepened existing inequities.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

5.1 Ensure all K-12 schools can support opportunities for equitable, effective, rigorous and joyful learning, especially in communities affected by school closures.

5.2 Direct investments to facilities and organizations where inequitable access to lifelong learning facilities currently exist.

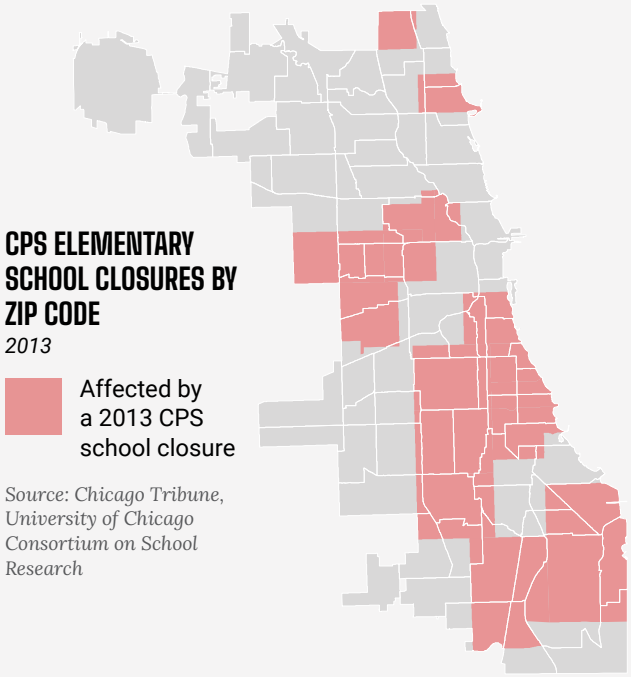
5.3 Create and support intergenerational community learning hubs in all neighborhoods.

5.4 Design learning environments to meet the needs of all residents, prioritizing language access and accessibility for those with disabilities.

5.5 Reduce financial and technology barriers to accessing community and educational programs.

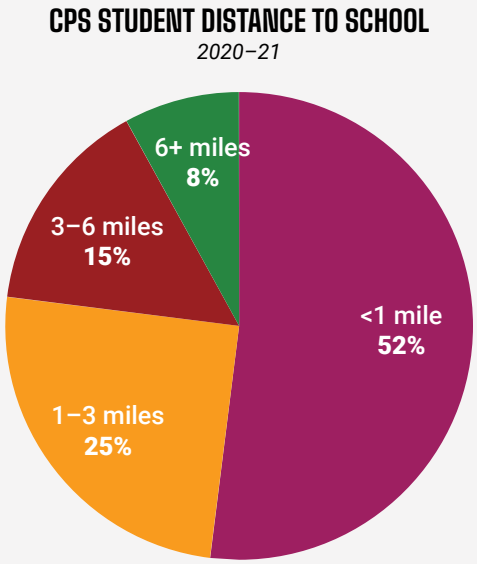
SUPPORTING DATA

49 school closures in 2013 largely occurred on the South and West sides.



Source: Chicago Tribune, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

More than 25,000 public school students travel 6+ miles to attend classes.



Source: Chicago Public Schools ARA Dashboard

"It's not that there are no [learning] opportunities, it's that folks don't know how to plug in. [They] don't know how to get connected to them. We also saw a lot that folks were not connected to each other, to other organizations, to other folks doing similar work, or that they were not being connected to civic entities or other municipality resources and opportunities."

— *Quenna Lené Barrett* | **Goodman Theatre, Associate Director of Education**

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Lifelong Learning** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 7 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Honoring the intrinsic value of human lives by promoting equity in health and safety

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Public health and safety are essential for all Chicagoans to feel protected and cared for as individuals and as a cohesive community.

Structural racism and other systems of oppression are the root causes of Chicago's gaping health inequities, including inequities based on gender and income. Health inequities are the systematic differences in health status and outcomes across populations that are unfair, unjust, and remediable.

Life expectancy for Black Chicagoans is 10 years shorter than white residents, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health. Every year, thousands of Chicagoans die earlier than they would if there were no health inequities, which exist across virtually all disease categories. The inequities persist for violence-related deaths, especially involving the city's pervasive gun violence. Thousands of violent incidents every year result in hundreds of deaths and injuries, as well as trauma for individuals and communities. Black Chicagoans in their late teens are especially impacted by death by homicide, with rates as much as 10 times greater than city averages, according to a recent Northwestern Institute for Policy Research study. Immigrant Chicagoans also face particular challenges due to lack of access to healthcare and little familiarity with how health and safety systems work.

The Public Health and Safety pillar's goals are intended to reduce threats to physical and mental health, prioritize public health and contribute to the elimination of inequities in both health and safety by making health equity a top priority for the City of Chicago.

Health inequities exist across disease categories and in broad measures such as life expectancy. The Chicago Health Atlas displays data in charts and maps of many of the health inequities in Chicago and is available at chicagohealthatlas.org.

KEY TERMS

Health Equity	An outcome achieved when every person can attain their full health potential without being without being oppressed or intentionally excluded because of social position. Health inequities are systematic differences in health status and outcomes across populations that are unfair, unjust and remediable.
Trauma-Informed Approach	Recognizes the many symptoms of trauma and its widespread impact and responds with appropriate policies and procedures that simultaneously serve to prevent re-traumatization.

> *"There needs to be more investment in health equity. That's something that really concerns me, the changes in life expectancy over the course of a 20-minute drive in Chicago."*
>
> – Jadalyn Rand | **Austin**

GOAL 1

Ensure equitable, affordable healthcare services for all Chicagoans.

Access to affordable healthcare is particularly challenging for individuals without insurance. Approximately 10% of Chicago residents lived without health insurance in recent years, with uninsured Latino residents reaching nearly 17%. Even among the insured, healthcare inequities persist among population groups. For example, from 2018-20, less than 65% of pregnant Black women received prenatal care during their first trimester, while nearly 80% of white women did.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Ensure access to affordable high-quality, physical, mental health, and substance use health services.

1.2 Make all health, public and social services trauma-informed and culturally responsive.

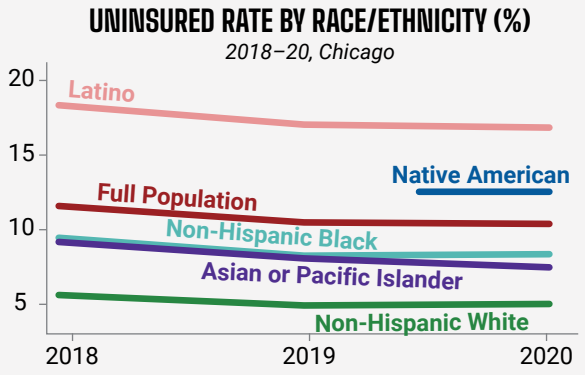
1.3 Encourage and provide support for Black, Latino and Native American people to pursue health careers.

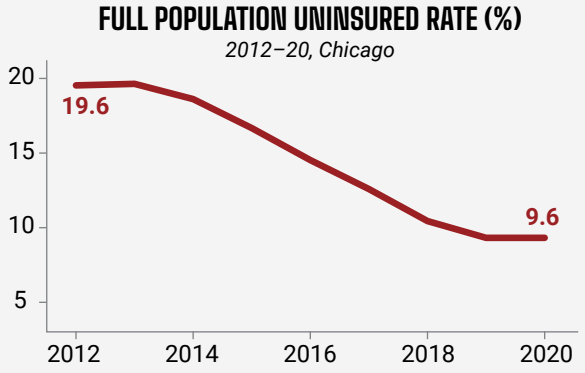
1.4 Ensure every Chicagoan has affordable and high-quality health insurance coverage.

1.5 Make healthcare institutions gateways to other services, resources and supports.

SUPPORTING DATA

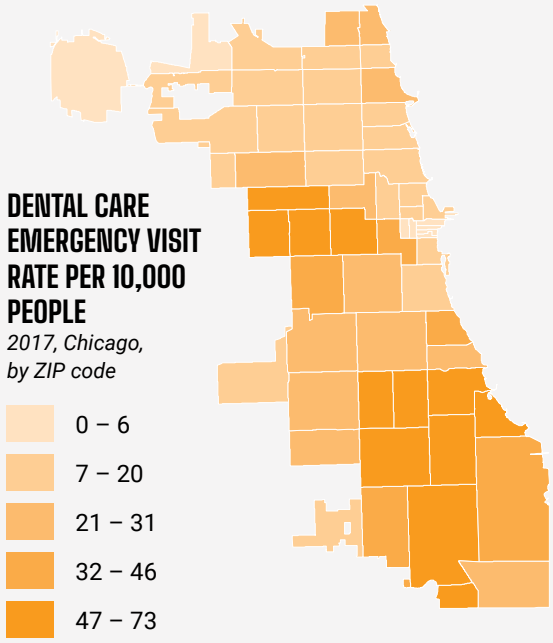
Almost 10% of Chicagoans were uninsured in 2020.





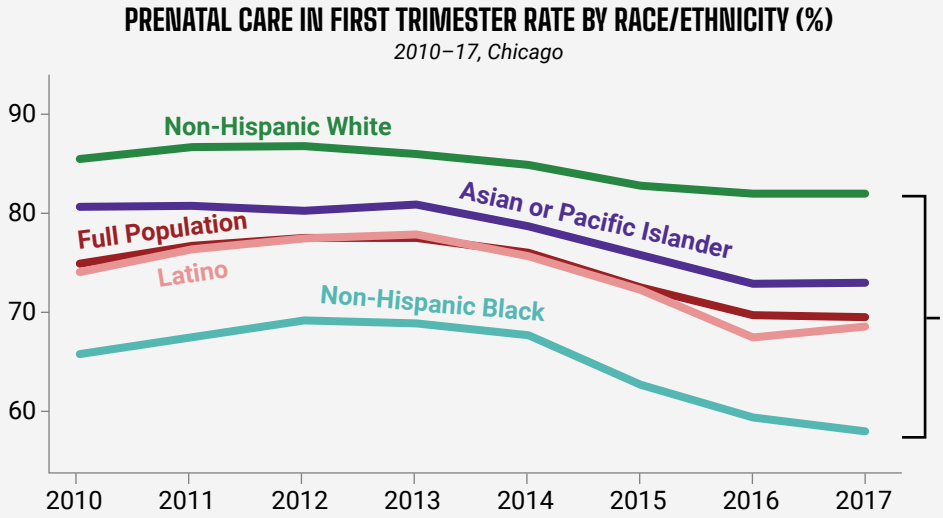
Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

The rate of dental care emergencies reflects broader health care inequities citywide.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Illinois Department of Public Health, Hospital Discharge Data

Prenatal care declined for all population groups for much of the last decade.



Black residents received prenatal care in the first trimester **24% LESS** than white residents in 2017.

Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Illinois Department of Public Health, Birth Certificate Data Files

GOAL 2

Strengthen trauma-informed public health systems to respond to mental and behavioral health conditions.

mental health conditions and substance use are public health issues that require compassionate, trauma-informed responses from public health systems. Opioid-related deaths, behavioral health-related hospitalizations and symptoms of depression disproportionately impact Black and Asian American or Pacific Islander residents more than white Chicagoans, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health.

OBJECTIVES

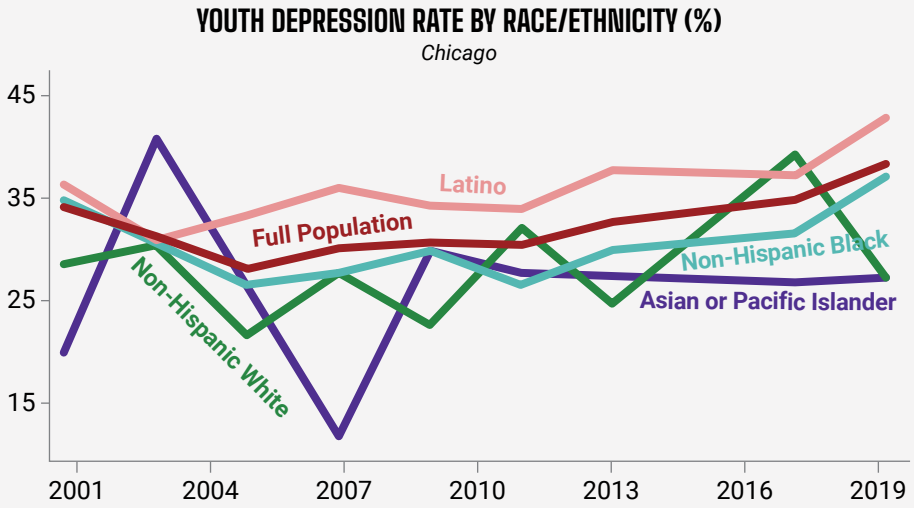
To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Expand and increase access, resources and intentionally-designed physical and programmed spaces for harm reduction, safe drug use and recovery.

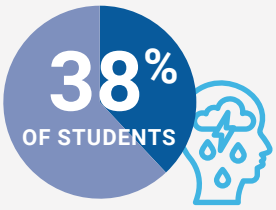
2.2 Expand and strengthen a public health workforce to respond to behavioral, socio-economic and violence problems instead of the police.

SUPPORTING DATA

Youth depression is a significant health issue for multiple population groups.

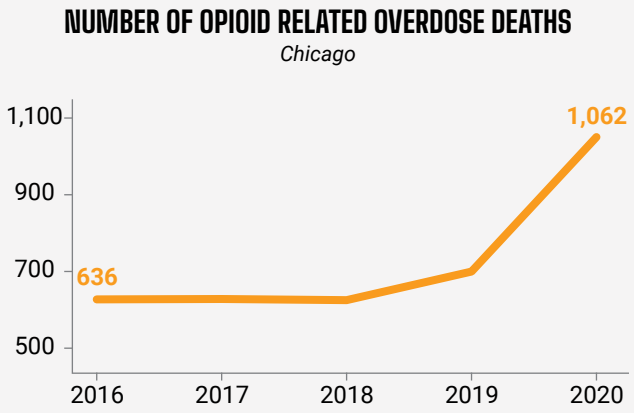


Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Survey



report feeling so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that they stopped doing usual activities.

Opioid-related deaths have nearly doubled in recent years.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Cook County Medical Examiner

GOAL 3

Establish and maintain the necessary governmental public health and emergency management capacity, staff and infrastructure, and change community conditions to eliminate health inequities and respond to public health emergencies.

Prior to COVID-19, government funding for public health initiatives steadily decreased nationwide in recent decades by nearly 20 percent resulting in reduced public resources for the public health system, according to a Kaiser Health News and Associated Press study. Chicago's future budgeting priorities should calculate the costs of current health inequities, future public health emergencies and the ongoing impact of the climate emergency, especially on residents who have fewer resources.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Expand and sustain flexible public funding for City public health staff and infrastructure.

3.2 Expand and sustain flexible public funding for government and community health initiatives.

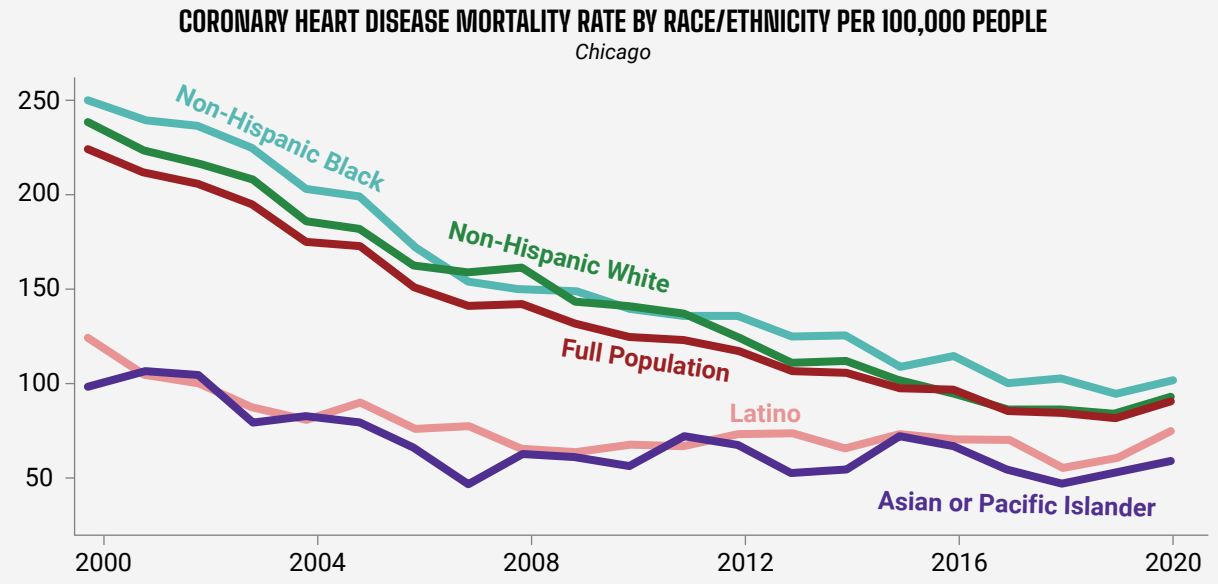
3.3 Partner City agencies with community organizations to better meet people's unmet health needs.

3.4 Ensure access to sufficient nourishing, culturally relevant and affordable foods.

3.5 Support the health of babies, children and parents and other caregivers.

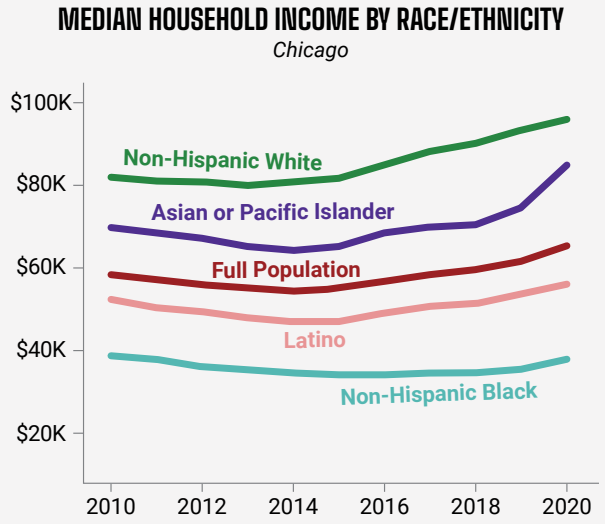
SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's heart disease rates declined by half over a 20-year period.



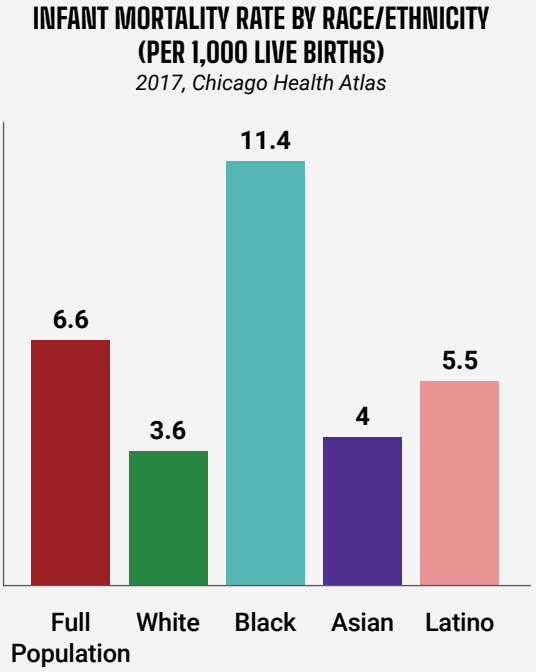
Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Illinois Department of Health, Death Certificate Data Files

Household income is a contributing factor to race-related health disparities.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

The mortality rate of Black infants is three times higher than white infants.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas

GOAL 4

Ensure Chicago is a city where everyone can thrive without fear of violence.

Chicago's pervasive violence has caused residents of all races to feel less secure in their neighborhoods. According to an annual survey by the Chicago Department of Public Health, between 2015 and 2021, the rate of Black residents reporting a sense of safety in their neighborhoods dropped more than 20%. The sense of safety rate dropped nearly 20% for Latino residents, 11% for white residents and 3% for Asian residents. Inequity in exposure to violence is one health inequity among many public health problems citywide.

To achieve this goal, We Will...

4.1 Reduce instances of violence in communities most impacted by violence and the criminal-legal system.

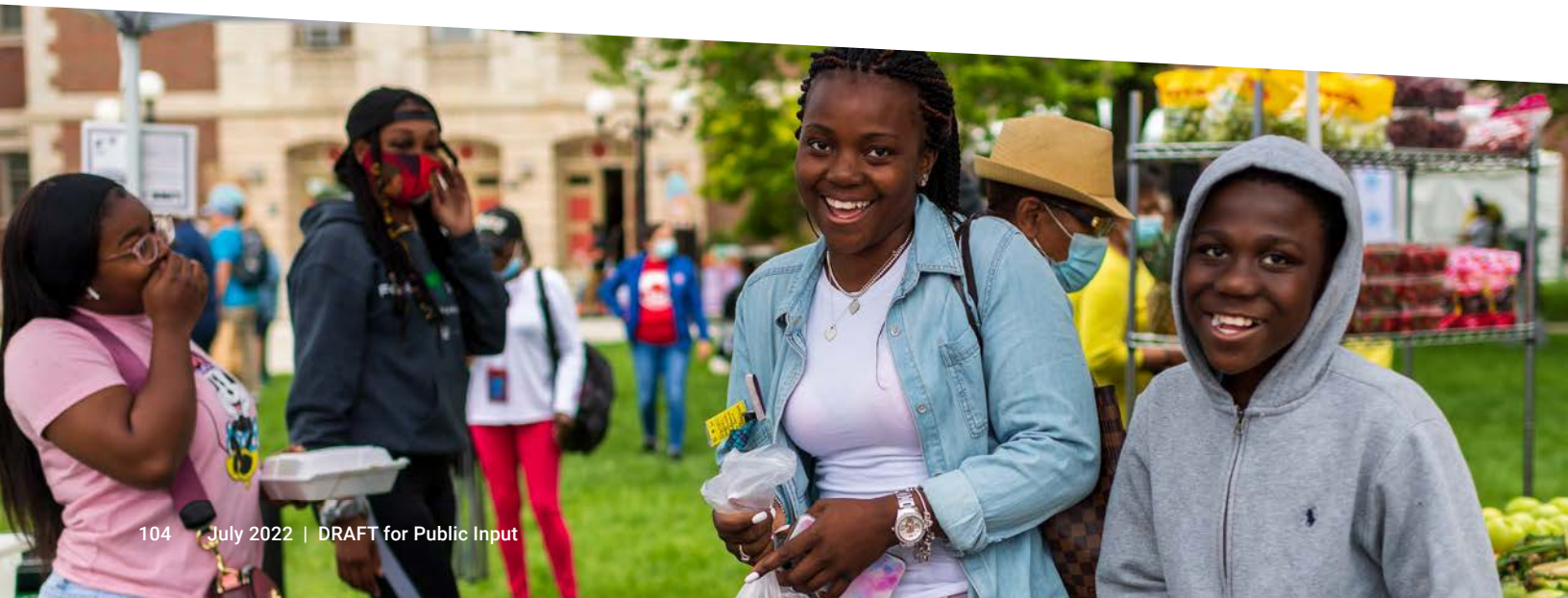
4.2 Reduce contact between community and police and increase police accountability.

4.3 Support coordination and deployment of rapid, community-based responses to outbreaks of violence.

4.4 Support and educate community members on how to address incidences of trauma.

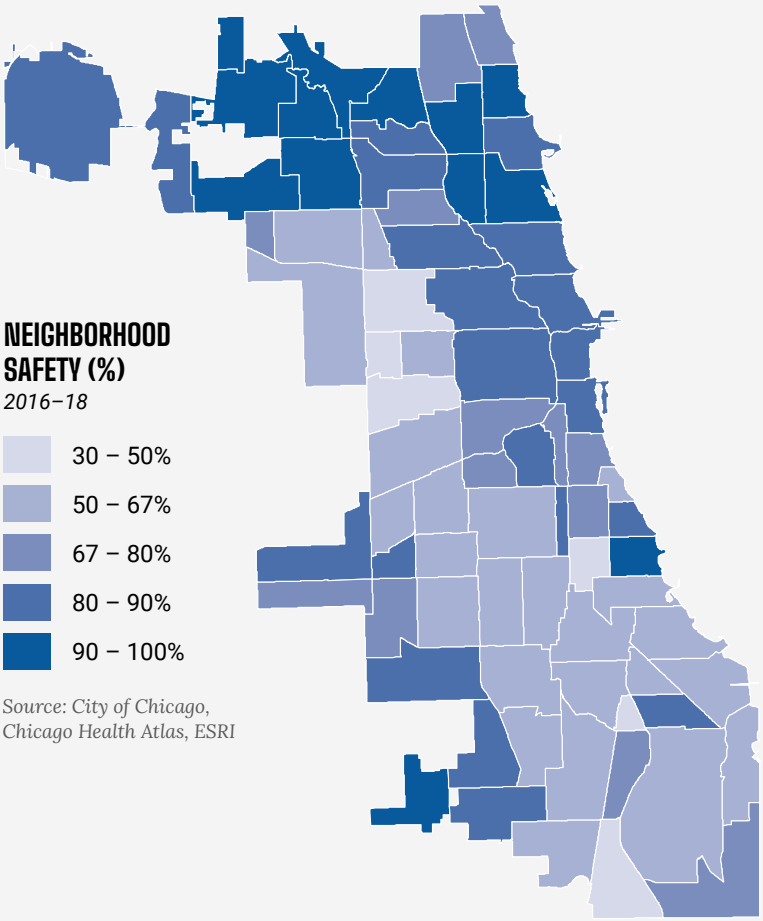
4.5 Expand and sustain programs for people previously incarcerated or harmed in other ways by the criminal-legal system.

4.6 Reduce incidences of and support the stability, healing and thriving of survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking through citywide trauma-informed response.



SUPPORTING DATA

Community rates of feeling safe "all" or "most" of the time



Source: City of Chicago, Chicago Health Atlas, ESRI

> *"A lot of the people that we work with have had traumatic experiences, both with the police and with inter-community violence, and there's a lot of wrestling between the need to feel safe and really reimagining what safe means, and also recognizing that policing and incarceration has done nothing to further protect their safety."*
>
> — Katelyn Johnson | **BlackRoots Alliance, Executive Director**

GOAL 5

Make infrastructure, physical spaces and services safe, beautiful and accessible to the aspirations and cultures of communities.

Improved health- and accessibility-focused design standards for public spaces, buildings, services and infrastructure will make Chicago's cityscape more supportive for all people's health and wellbeing. This is especially needed for the estimated 11 percent of Chicagoans and 35 percent of Chicago older persons who have a disability, people experiencing homelessness and people with medical conditions for which amenities can be designed to support. Making the cityscape responsive to people's health and accessibility needs supports the wellbeing and safety of all Chicagoans and visitors to the city.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

5.1 Enhance accessibility, safety and quality of public spaces.

5.2 Provide and facilitate the ownership and activation of vacant lots and buildings by block residents and local businesses.

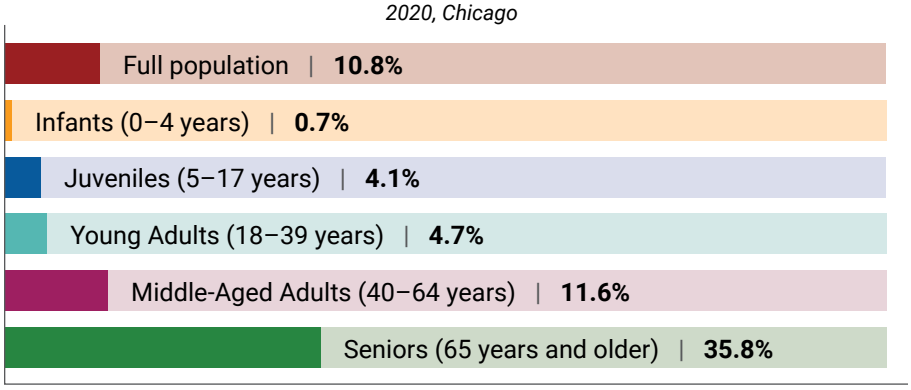
5.3 Develop infrastructure and amenities that support everyone, especially people with health and mobility challenges.

5.4 Make physical activity opportunities accessible, easy and equitable.

SUPPORTING DATA

Approximately 11% of Chicagoans identify as a person with a disability or as disabled.

DISABILITY BY AGE
2020, Chicago



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Public Health & Safety** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

PILLAR 8 OF 8

WE WILL CHICAGO

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Creating access and connections through safe and reliable physical infrastructure and transportation networks

CHICAGO
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

wewillchicago.com

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Chicago's transportation and infrastructure systems support the mobility of people, goods, services and information throughout the city and beyond.

The systems include extensive passenger rail and bus routes, streets and alleys, highways, airports, industrial rail lines, waterways, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, power grids, communications networks and other public and private assets.

Considered one of the most well-connected cities in the country and a global transportation hub, Chicago still has multiple gaps in services that impact the people who live and work here. The gaps include public transit services, neighborhood walkability, protected bike lanes, broadband access and negative impacts associated with infrastructure construction and operation.

The Transportation & Infrastructure goals are focused on maintaining Chicago's existing systems while enhancing their access and benefits to all city residents and workers.

> *"Public transportation spots are not always accessible to people with wheelchairs. Ideally, it would be great if all el train stops, Metra and Amtrak were wheelchair accessible."*
>
> – *Michelle* | **West Loop**

KEY TERMS

Complete Streets	The approach to planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining streets that enables safe, easy access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, people using mobility devices, transit riders, bicyclists and motorists of all ages and abilities.
Shared Mobility	Transportation services and resources that are shared among users, either together or one after another, such as bike and scooter sharing, carsharing, carpooling and vanpooling.
Universal Accessibility	Universal accessibility means that everyone—in all stages of life, regardless of any disability—can access transportation options that will get them anywhere they need to go.

> *"For decades, there has been commercial freight running adjacent to our church building spewing toxic chemicals in the backyards, parks and residential parking lots in our communities—something that does not occur in other neighborhoods, and it contributes greatly to poor air quality and health disparities."*

– Melvin Thompson | **The Endeleo Institute, Inc, Executive Director**

Most maps within the plan incorporate data collected at one of several defined subgeographies, including official Chicago Community Area boundaries and census tracts/block groups used by the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey. Some data sources are only available at the Community Area level, while others are available at more detailed subgeographies. These subgeographies span areas that are non-residential, including parks, bodies of water, industrial areas, and O'Hare Airport. In these instances, the data presented is intended to reflect average conditions of the residents, employees, etc. who are located nearby.

GOAL 1

Ensure the city's transportation networks and infrastructure systems are safe, equitable and accessible for all.

While many aspects of existing networks and the built infrastructure sustain the lives of Chicagoans, not all residents experience the same level of access or connectivity. Ongoing efforts to expand and modernize Chicago's public transit, transportation and infrastructure networks should prioritize geographies and users that have been marginalized by public- and private-sector investments. Far South and West side neighborhoods experience more limited commuter rail service and predominantly Black and Latino households lack access to broadband internet. According to a Metropolitan Planning Council report, nearly every person in the Chicago region, or someone they care for, will face a disability that impacts their mobility at some point in their life. Age, illness, injury, pregnancy and genetics can all affect mobility. Chicago's infrastructure system must be designed to meet the needs of all residents, no matter their age or ability.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

1.1 Ensure transportation and infrastructure systems are equitably distributed, universally accessible and affordable.

1.2 Prioritize infrastructure that reinforces safe movement for all users, regardless of mode, age, ability, or income.

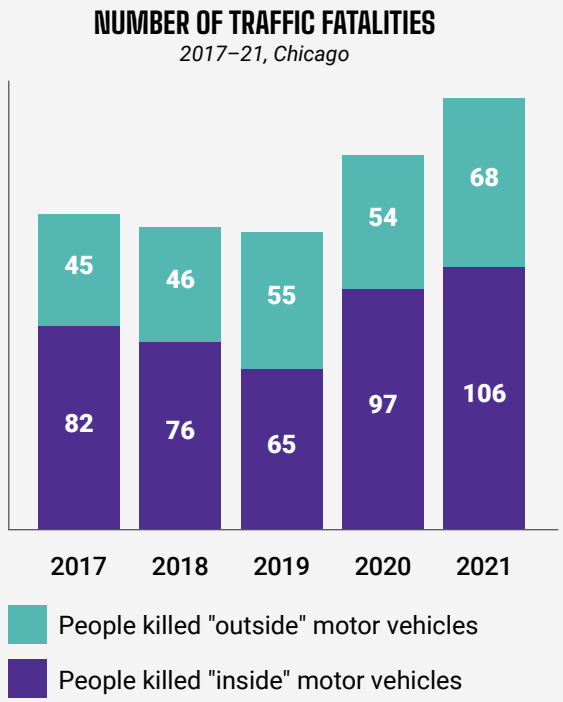
1.3 Design and maintain infrastructure that enhances quality of life and pride of place.

1.4 Ensure transportation systems support Chicago's world class airports.

1.5 Ensure access to high-quality broadband internet across the city.

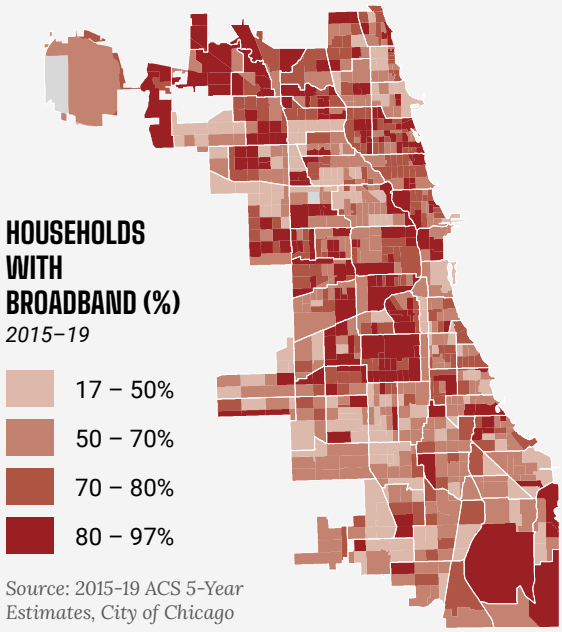
SUPPORTING DATA

The majority of Chicago traffic crash deaths involve vehicle occupants or drivers.



Source: City of Chicago Department of Transportation, May 2022

Less than 70% of South and West side households have broadband internet.



Source: 2015-19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, City of Chicago

> *"I frequently ride my bike to a part-time job on the far West Side. As I trend South and West, the ride gets rougher and more hostile. There is noticeably less infrastructure for those outside of cars, and the car infrastructure is in notably worse shape."*
>
> — Joshua Woods | **Connetics Transportation Group, Planner I**

GOAL 2

Create transportation networks that support greater connectivity by active and sustainable options such as walking, public transit, biking and other methods that do not require car ownership.

While investments continue to be made in the City's transit system and bike network, most Chicago commuters drive to work, according to U.S. Census data. Prioritizing programs to expand other transportation options, improve street safety and reduce the need to travel by car may result in reduced congestion, decreased pollution, cheaper transportation costs, time savings for commuters and more healthy and sustainable lifestyles for the entire region.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

2.1 Prioritize expanding public transit options in communities with the greatest mobility needs.

2.2 Prioritize public transit options that create connectivity across neighborhoods outside of the downtown.

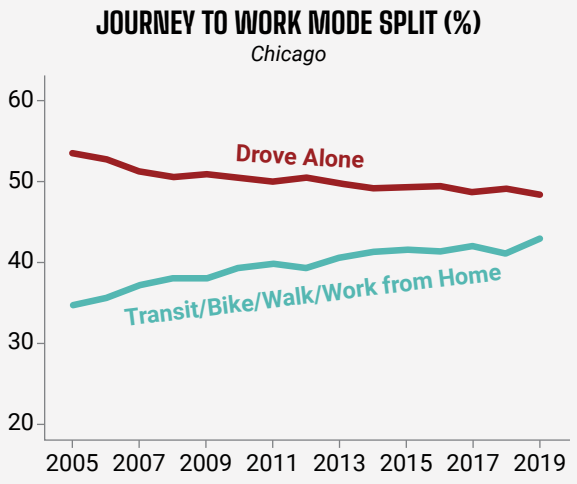
2.3 Integrate and seamlessly connect active and sustainable transportation options such as walking, transit, biking and riding scooters.

2.4 Prioritize infrastructure that is aesthetically pleasing and inviting, designing and building spaces that are calm, protected and safe for people walking, using transit, biking and making connections between modes.

2.5 Prioritize investments in infrastructure and transit that facilitate walking, transit and biking.

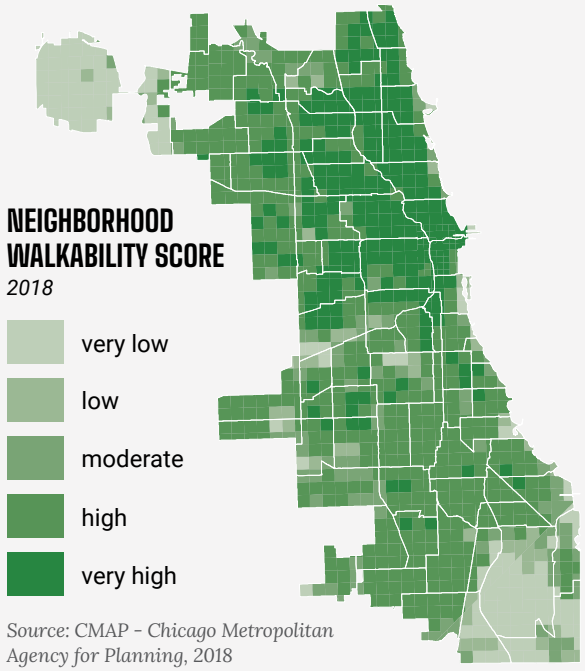
SUPPORTING DATA

More Chicagoans are choosing alternative transportation modes to work.



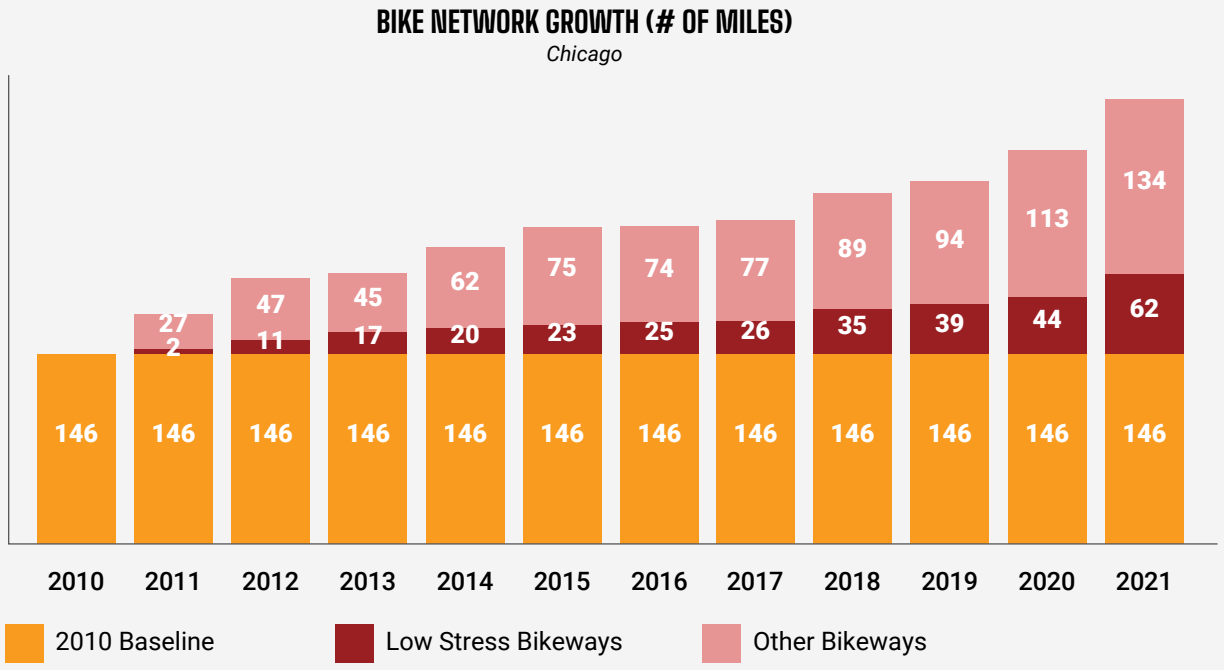
Source: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, 2019

Chicago's most walkable neighborhoods are on the North Side.



Source: CMAP - Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2018

Chicago's bicycle infrastructure continues to expand citywide.



Source: Chicago Department of Transportation

GOAL 3

Balance the economic benefits of moving goods with negative impacts on communities, eliminating, then equitably distributing burdens.

Chicago's evolution as a global transportation hub is a strong contributor to the region's economy. However, this status comes with consequences to some residential neighborhoods that are disproportionally exposed to excessive air pollution and industrial traffic. Land use and investment patterns of recent decades have made certain predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods on the South, Southwest and Far South sides particularly burdened by negative industrial impacts.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

3.1 Make freight corridors safe for all, prioritizing the safety of people walking, using transit and biking.

3.2 Mitigate the health, safety and environmental burdens caused by trains, trucks and delivery vehicles.

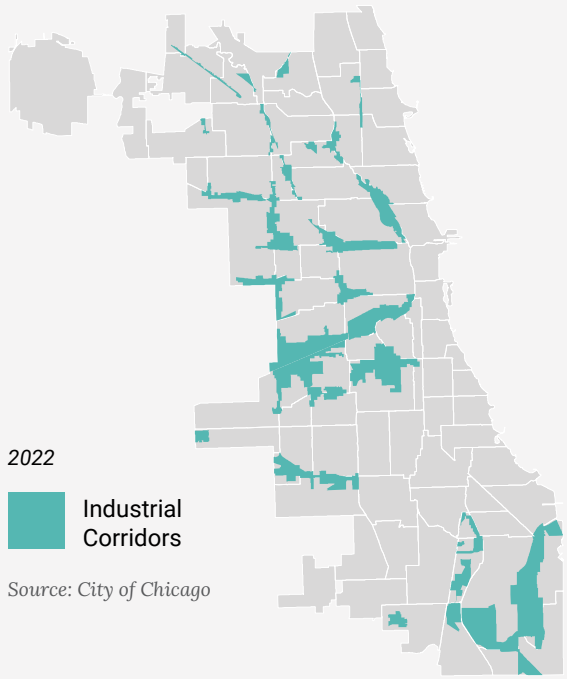
3.3 Reduce the disproportionate burdens on communities adjacent to industrial corridors, intermodal facilities and airports.

3.4 Ensure freight-related projects are compatible with local community plans.

3.5 Maintain the City's role as a global intermodal hub with strategic and innovative transportation and infrastructure investments.

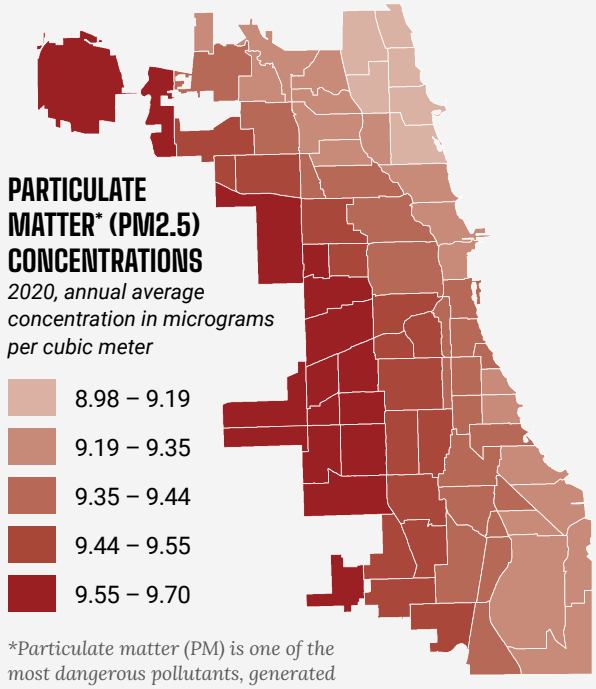
SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's 26 industrial corridors are primarily located along waterways, highways and rail lines.



Source: City of Chicago

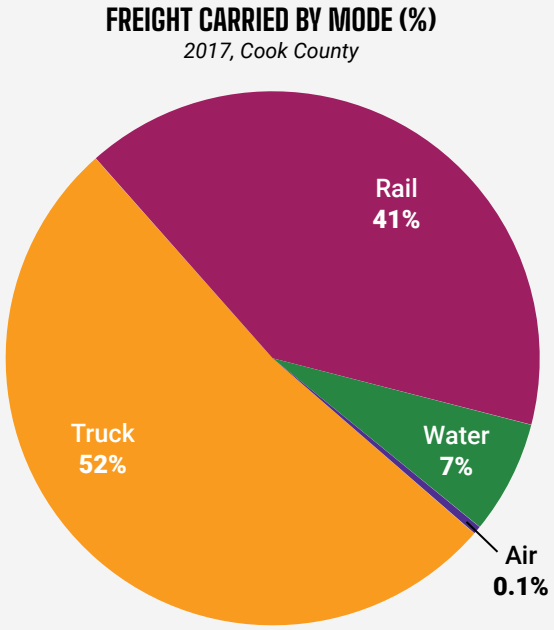
Areas located near highways and industrial facilities experience higher levels of air pollution.



**Particulate matter (PM) is one of the most dangerous pollutants, generated by industrial facilities, cars and trucks.*

Source: City of Chicago

Trucks carry more than half of all freight in Cook County.



Source: Master Plan for Illinois International Port District (IIPD)

> *"Freight activity is a vital economic driver for communities. It is not something that people want to remove. But you want to be smart about the way it interacts in neighborhoods and on those corridors where you have heavy bike traffic and transit."*
>
> — Dr. Billy Bachman | **Urban Design 4 Health, Senior Analyst & Marketing Strategist**

GOAL 4

Prioritize investments in communities that have been historically harmed by inequities in past transportation and infrastructure decision-making.

The construction of many interstate highways, institutions and large facilities in Chicago were often completed where socioeconomic factors provided the fewest barriers to their development. Today, their presence can present more burdens than benefits for nearby residents due to pollution, gentrification, displacement and other negative impacts.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

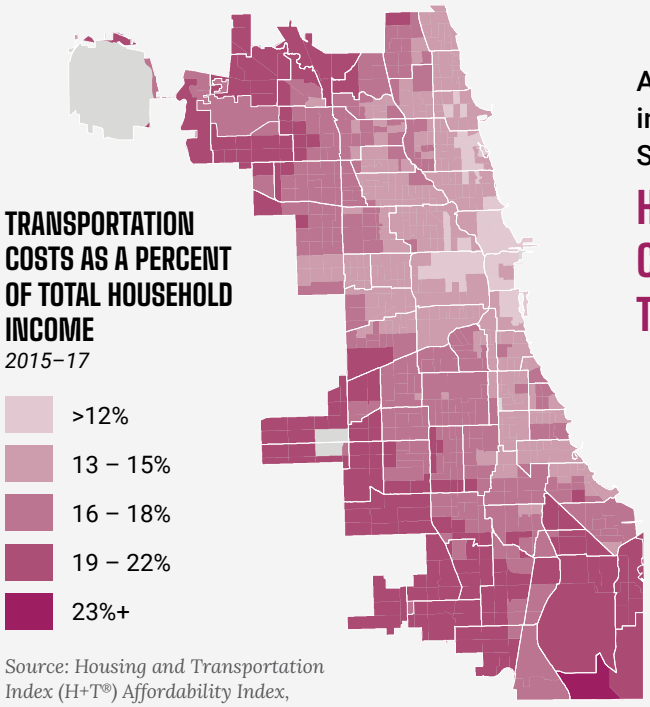
4.1 Reconnect communities that have been divided by transportation infrastructure.

4.2 Support neighborhood and network-scale transportation and infrastructure projects advocated by local communities.

4.3 Establish use of equity-related metrics in project development and evaluation processes for transportation and infrastructure projects.

SUPPORTING DATA

Households located near the city's borders generally experience higher transportation costs.



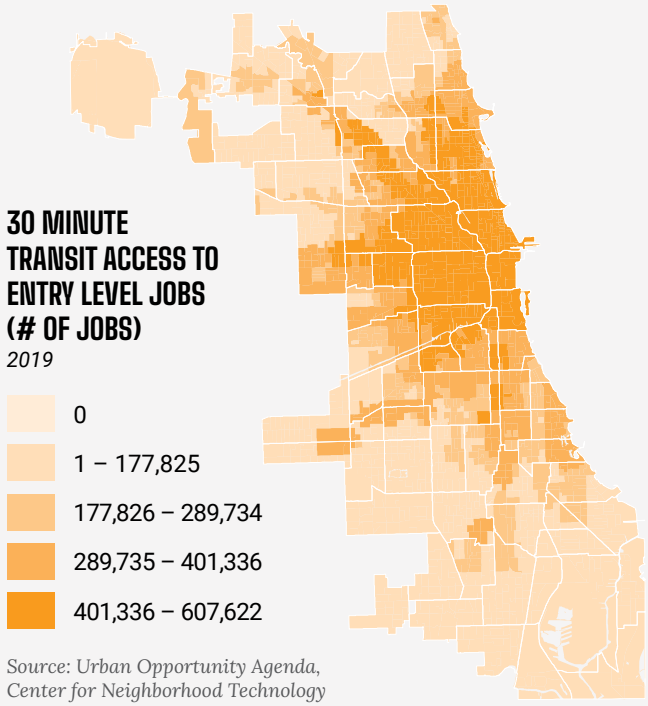
Source: Housing and Transportation Index (H+T®) Affordability Index, Center for Neighborhood Technology

Areas most impacted by roadway infrastructure, particularly on the South side, tend to experience

HIGHER TRANSPORTATION COSTS AND HIGHER TRAVEL TIMES TO JOBS BY TRANSIT.

Entry-level jobs with the shortest commutes are primarily located downtown and in adjacent community areas.

> *"Early in this process we spoke a lot about how infrastructure has divided our communities, and our policies should focus on reconnecting communities."*
>
> – Ben Cosgrove | Englewood STEM High School, Biology and Chemistry Teacher



Source: Urban Opportunity Agenda, Center for Neighborhood Technology

GOAL 5

Leverage resources for transportation and infrastructure projects that promote environmental sustainability and resilience.

Strategic public investments that enhance clean transportation options—such as bicycling and electric vehicles—and manage the impact of climate change—such as stormwater landscapes—will help make Chicago more sustainable for all.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

5.1 Reduce pollutants generated by transportation-related sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.

5.2 Expand the use and availability of transportation and infrastructure funding sources for all neighborhoods to increase climate-smart investments and overall community resiliency.

5.3 Invest in transportation and infrastructure projects that support resilience and protect water and other natural resources.

5.4 Leverage transportation and infrastructure assets to manage the environmental impacts of flooding and stormwater runoff.

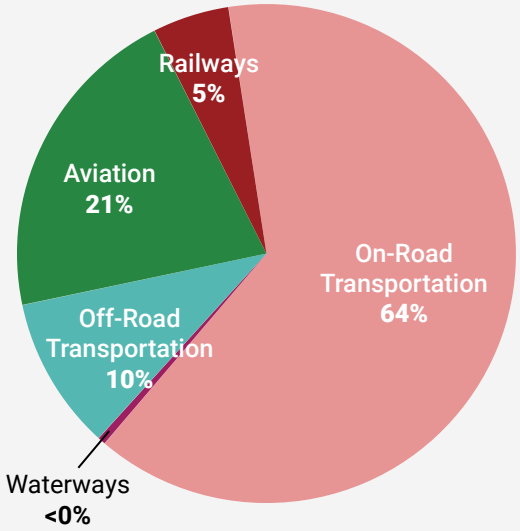
5.5 Require the use of sustainable design guidelines and the use of renewable and sustainable materials in transportation and infrastructure projects.

SUPPORTING DATA

The majority of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions comes from on-road vehicles.

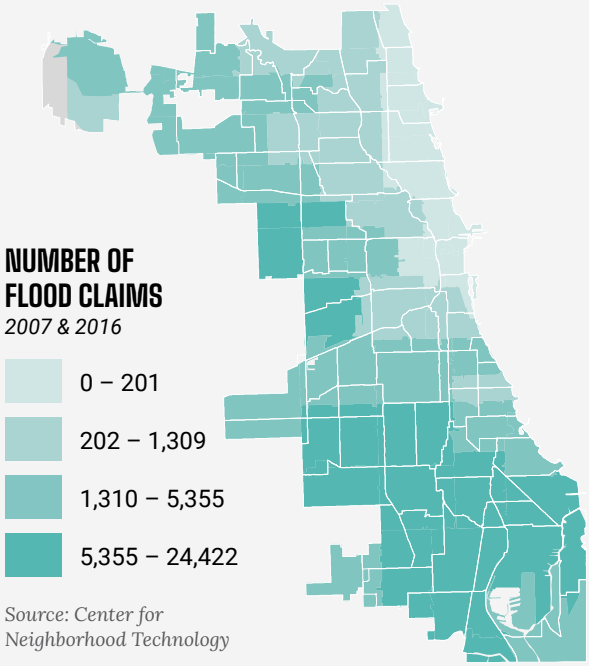
TRANSPORTATION-GENERATED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY SOURCE

2017, Chicago



Source: City of Chicago Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report

87% of flood claims are paid on the South and West Sides.

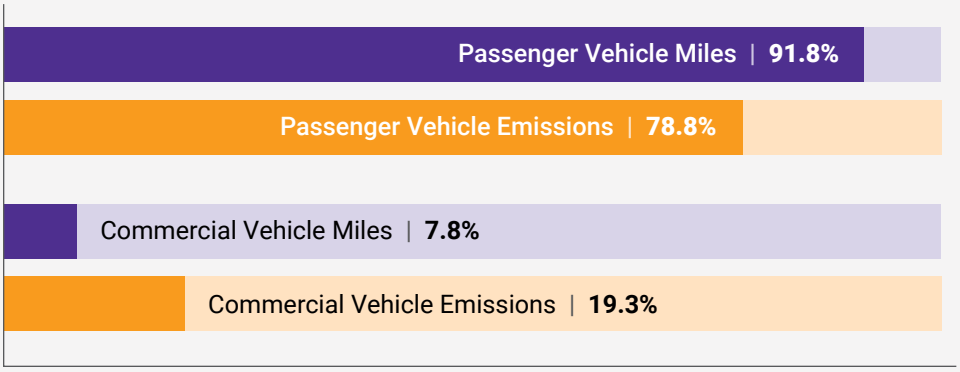


Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

Passenger vehicles and gas-fueled commercial vehicles represent substantial opportunities to decrease harmful emissions.

VEHICLES MILES AND EMISSIONS FOR PASSENGER AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES (% OF TOTAL)

2020, Chicago



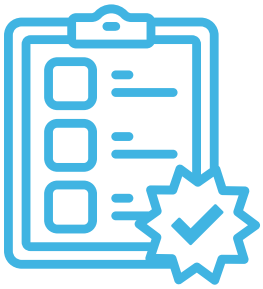
Source: Spring 2020 regional conformity model run, CMAP

> *"Ensure folks who are offering the plan are held accountable to what is in the plan. Create trust by showing folks that their engagement as a community is being honored both in listening and in following through."*
>
> — *LaTanya Lane* | **Volunteer**

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Transportation & Infrastructure** pillar team, visit wewillchicago.com*

NEXT STEPS

Plan Implementation



Public feedback to the draft We Will Chicago framework will be incorporated by planning staff in late 2022 and the updated document will be presented to the Chicago Plan Commission in early 2023.

We Will's adoption by Plan Commission would lead to multiple public-sector implementation measures that include new legislation, policies, executive orders, and other action items. The City would establish an implementation and administrative structure that facilitates accountability and transparency between departments, sister agencies and community stakeholders, and the budgets and scopes of existing City programs would undergo equity analyses for their alignment with the framework's goals and objectives. The Plan Commission's formal review and approval of large construction projects would also consider the projects' potential to advance the framework's goals and objectives.

Private-sector participation in the plan's implementation would simultaneously be advanced through enhanced coordination and outreach to delegate agencies, civic organizations, community groups, philanthropies, institutions, corporations, and individuals that support individual pillar goals or the framework's overarching objective for a more equitable and resilient city.

More than 600 policy ideas generated by We Will's research teams would continue to be refined and implemented where possible through rules, legislation or budgeting in 2023 and beyond.

Other City Initiatives

As We Will Chicago advances from pre-planning and research phases toward potential adoption and implementation in 2023 and beyond, multiple City agencies are already administering new programs and resources that share the plan's goals for citywide equity and resilience.

The programs include:

INVEST South/West

INVEST South/West is a multi-departmental community revitalization initiative launched in 2019 that is strategically reversing decades of disinvestment in 12 commercial corridors on the South and West sides. The initiative has already aligned more than $1.4 billion in public and private investments that are bringing vitality, jobs and economic opportunity to the targeted areas.

Chicago Recovery Plan

The Chicago Recovery Plan was created in 2021 to guide an equitable and sustainable allocation of $1.2 billion in federal funding for Covid-related recovery efforts. The plan focuses on communities hit hardest by the pandemic by supporting projects that improve residents' health, wellbeing, quality of life and related amenities.

Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD)

City policies have encouraged dense, pedestrian-friendly development near transit since 2013. In 2021, Plan Commission adopted Chicago's first-ever equitable TOD plan to ensure all residents in Chicago are able to live in walkable, vibrant communities connected to transit.

Strategic Plan for Transportation

The Chicago Department of Transportation's 2021 strategic plan was the country's first to address the previous year's health, economic and racial justice crises by partnering with community and civic groups to ensure its goals, strategies and benchmarks reflect the lived experience of Chicagoans and long-standing equity issues in transportation.

Climate Action Plan

Chicago's 2022 Climate Action Plan (CAP) sets a course to reduce the city's carbons emissions 62% by 2040. Anchored in values of economic inclusion and savings, pollution burden reduction and equitable access to critical infrastructure and community health and resilience, the 2022 CAP prioritizes delivering meaningful community benefits and system improvements as the City continues to lead on climate.

Healthy Chicago 2025

Chicago's five-year community health improvement plan that focuses on racial and health equity to meet our goal of reducing the Black-white life expectancy gap. Launched in 2020, Healthy Chicago reflects the work of community members and organizations to assess the current status of our communities and organizations and develop approaches to strengthen neighborhood vitality and system coordination.

Food Equity Council

Formally established in February 2022, The City Food Equity Council is a multiyear effort to transform our food system by reimagining it in to one that is more just and equitable. This private-public partnership is collaborating to address immediate needs as well as getting to the root causes of food inequity.

Blueprint for Fair Housing

Issued in spring 2021, the City's fair housing blueprint includes eight goals and associated strategies to reduce housing segregation, access disparities and inequitable investment patterns that have made Chicago the fifth-most racially and economically segregated metropolitan area in the country.

Community Wealth-Building

Led by Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice, the wealth-building initiative and its advisory council support models of local, democratic and shared ownership of community assets such as worker cooperatives, community land trusts and more.

Year of Healing

The Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice initiative aims to build racial healing and transformation through three core goals in 2022: reflecting on our past, reclaiming our present, and reimagining our future.

Our Roots Chicago

Part of the Climate Action Plan, Our Roots Chicago aims to equitably expand the city's tree canopy with 75,000 new trees in 2022.

Let's Go. Chicago Roadmap

The Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges initiative is designed to improve student outcomes involving college readiness, enrollment, persistence, degree attainment, and employment.

Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking Strategic Plan

Released in 2021, the plan addresses gender-based violence and human trafficking by acknowledging the intersection of racism and gender inequities while implementing trauma-informed strategies that create a safer, more equitable and inclusive Chicago.

Community Safety Coordination Center

The community safety initiative addresses the root causes of violence and applies lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate a data-informed, evidence-based and community-driven response to gun violence.

Chicago Business Centers and Neighborhood Business Development Centers

The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection programs provide licensing and development-oriented assistance to small businesses through eight regional business hubs and through non-profit business service organizations with special focus on entrepreneurs in historically underserved areas.

Every Child Ready Chicago

A public-private partnership led by the Mayor's Office in partnership with Start Early, the Every Child program provides resources to ensure children entering kindergarten are ready to succeed in school and life.

Family Connects Chicago

Family Connects provides in-home nursing services, guidance and resources to families with newborns.

My CHI. My Future.

The youth development initiative aims to connect every young Chicagoan to an out-of-school program affiliated with more than 220 organizations, sister agencies and departments citywide.

The Framework for Mental Health Equity

As an action plan for mental health equity, the framework consists of an integrated network of service providers that ensure all residents have convenient and timely access to the mental health services.

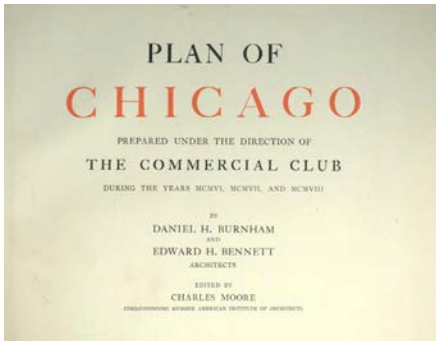
PLANS, PURPOSES, AND PLAN COMMISSION

Chicago's history has been shaped by multiple private- and public-sector plans, policies and regulations that impact people who live and work here. While many plans have focused on specific community areas, like Englewood, or citywide assets, like the Chicago River, few have endeavored to address the entire city in a single document like We Will Chicago.

Plans for Chicago typically identify goals and objectives and include strategies on how to achieve them. Of the hundreds of plans that have been created by neighborhood groups, business associations, civic organizations and City departments, the plans that were formally adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission attained unique status as "official" documents intended to guide government administration decision-making. Adoption by the Chicago City Council can also provide formal recognition of a plan's goals, however Council approval is generally reserved for the legislation, budgeting and individual project approvals needed for a plan's implementation.

Overviews of select City plans and their purposes are below:

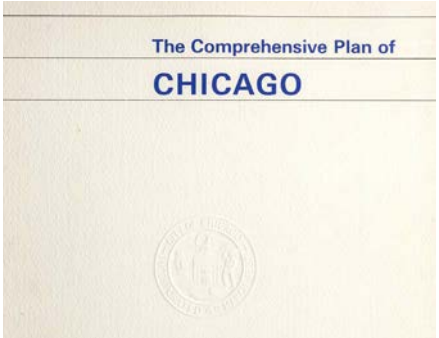
Citywide Plans


PLAN OF
CHICAGO
PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMERCIAL CLUB
DURING THE YEARS MCMVI, MCMVII, AND MCMVIII
BY
DANIEL H. BURNHAM
AND
EDWARD H. BENNETT
ARCHITECTS
EDITED BY
CHARLES MOORE

Plan of Chicago

Completed in 1909 by the Commercial Club of Chicago under the guidance of architects Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett, the Plan of Chicago established a vision for the City's growth that was so ambitious, the Chicago Plan Commission was created to help oversee its implementation. The plan's highly stylized renderings helped Chicagoans envision and support the development of key infrastructure projects

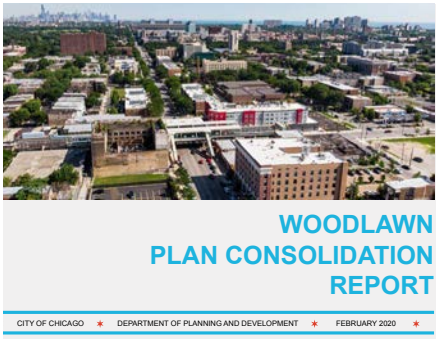
that continue to define major features of the city's physical environment. Chicago's publicly accessible lakefront, Union Station, Wacker Drive, Ogden Avenue, Northerly Island and Navy Pier are among the plan's legacy projects. The three-year planning process considered social aspects of the city's growth but ultimately excluded them as formal goals.



Comprehensive Plan of Chicago

Published in 1966 by the Department of Development and Planning, the Comprehensive Plan's wide-ranging scope addressed numerous social, physical, environmental, residential and economic issues. Its multi-phase objectives included new parks, roadways, industrial facilities, commercial centers and related quality-of-life enhancements for various planning districts throughout the city. While there is no known record of its adoption by Plan Commission, the plan contributed to the reuse of underutilized downtown rail yards for projects like Illinois Center and Dearborn Park, and it shepherded the bond-funded construction of modern fire and police buildings, health clinics, libraries and other public facilities throughout Chicago.

Community Plans



Woodlawn Consolidation Report

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2020, the Woodlawn Consolidation Report was compiled by the Departments of Housing and Planning and Development to address community concerns about the potential impacts of the Obama Presidential Center on existing residents and businesses, especially in terms of affordability and gentrification. The report includes portions of nine existing neighborhood plans that were already created by community stakeholders but never formally adopted by Plan Commission.

North Branch Framework

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2017, the North Branch Framework is a land use plan created by City departments and private consultants for 760 acres within the North Branch Industrial Corridor. The framework's three main goals aimed to maintain the corridor as an economic engine and job center; provide better access for all transportation modes; and enhance the area's unique natural and built environment. The plan

also led to the allocation of more than $1 billion in future property tax revenues for new public infrastructure that will, in part, support the development of Lincoln Yards.

Central Area Plan

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2003, the Central Area Plan was drafted by City departments and private consultants to coordinate downtown growth around three main themes: high-density mixed-use vitality; strengthened transportation connections; and expanded public open spaces and waterfronts. Several projects were subsequently completed, including a West Loop transit hub and an expanded Riverwalk, while others are still contemplated. The plan helped guide a downtown renaissance that was partly fueled by the return of residents and corporate headquarters from the suburbs, a trend shared with many U.S. cities.

Green Healthy Neighborhoods

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2014, Green Healthy Neighborhoods was created by the Department of Planning and Development, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and community partners to maximize the use of vacant land and other neighborhood resources within Chicago's Englewood, West Englewood, Washington Park and Woodlawn communities, as well as parts of the New City, Fuller Park and Greater Grand Crossing communities. The plan helped launch programs that provide for the sale of vacant City lots to neighbors for $1 each, the development of an urban district and positioned the Englewood elevated rail line for a recent $35 M federal grant request.

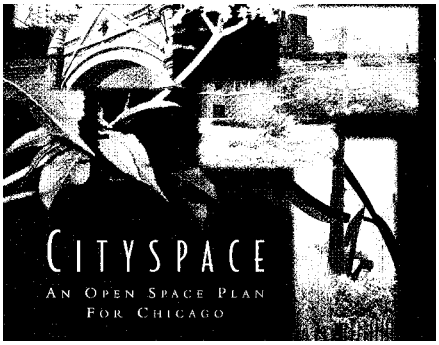
Open Space and Sustainability Plans

Chicago River Design Guidelines

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2019, the latest version of the Chicago River Design Guidelines was created by the Department of Planning and Development to establish construction guidelines for projects that reflect the river's evolving role as a quality-of-life amenity for adjacent neighborhoods. Previous development plans for the river corridor were adopted in 1999 and 2005, with each iteration focused on environmental health, public access and economic vitality.

Chicago Nature and Wildlife Plan

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2006, the Chicago Nature and Wildlife Plan was created by the Department of Planning and Development and community partners to establish a framework for protecting and expanding the city's ecosystems for the benefit of wildlife and people. The plan indexed more than 4,800 acres of local ecosystems and potential restoration sites and identified key land acquisitions like the 20-acres of unplatted cemetery land now the West Ridge Nature Preserve and the eagle habitat owned by Mittal Steel.



CitySpace Plan

Adopted by City Council in 1998, CitySpace identified comprehensive strategies for creating and preserving open space in Chicago. The planning process began in 1993 and involved the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Chicago Public Schools and community partners. The plan examined the history of open space in Chicago, deficiencies in the City's inventory, and established goals for creating new open spaces that more equitably distributed funding and improvements based on community area deficiencies and needs. Implementation resulted in the creation of over 800 acres of new open space.

COLLABORATORS

Pre-Planning Peer City Workshops

Mayor's Office
Department of Planning and Development
Chicago Department of Transportation
Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities
Department of Assets, Information and Services
Department of Family and Support Services
Chicago Transit Authority
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events
Chicago Department of Public Health
Department of Housing
Chicago Park District
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning
Chicago City Council
Plan Commission
Grow Greater Englewood
Southeast Environmental Task Force
Grassroots Collaborative
Austin Coming Together
Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community
Latin United Community Housing Association
My Block, My Hood, My City
American Indian Center
Endeleo Institute
Alliance of the Southeast
The Chicago Community Trust
Robert R. McCormick Foundation
Field Foundation
MacArthur Foundation
LISC
Elevated Chicago
Metropolitan Planning Council
Chicago United for Equity
Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance
Chicago Urban League
Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights
Trust for Public Land
United Way of Metro Chicago

Civic Consulting Alliance

Elevate Energy

Corporate Coalition

Civic Committee of the Commercial Club

Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

Related Midwest

Phase I Consulting Team

Katrina Balog | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Romina Castillo | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Bob Dean | CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY

Aaron Gatdula | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Pericles Georgopoulis | GINKGO PLANNING & DESIGN

Jackie Grimshaw | CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY

Carrie Grogan | RATIO ARCHITECTS

Riley Higgins | RATIO ARCHITECTS

Luke Hogan | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Courtney Kashima | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Andrea LaVant | LAVANT CONSULTING

Eli Lechter | RATIO ARCHITECTS

John Lee | RATIO ARCHITECTS

Heidy Persaud | CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY

Rebecca Raines | CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY

Jill Riddell | OFFICE OF MODERN COMPOSITION

Lesley Roth | RATIO ARCHITECTS

Erin Sanchez | RATIO ARCHITECTS

Scott Sarver | RATIO ARCHITECTS

Marissa Strassel | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Vitaliy Vladimirov | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Ferhat Zerin | GINKGO PLANNING & DESIGN

Phase I Focus Group Participants

Malek Abdulsamad | COMPASS

Elizabeth Adamczyk | RIDE OF SILENCE

Kareeshma Ali | GREATER GOOD STUDIO

Vince Amlin | THE CRIB BETHANY UNITED CHURCH OF GOD (HOMELESS)

Marquita Amoah | UC ENGAGEMENT

Sanchin Anand | DBHMS

Daniel Anello | KIDS FIRST CHICAGO

Pon Angara | BARKADA CIRCLE

Hamid Arastoopour | WISER IIT

Isobel Araulo | TERRITORY

Alireza Bahramirad | RESIDENT; NEW LANDLORD; IMMIGRANT, LANDLORD

Shelton Banks | RE: WORK TRAINING

Mikala Barrett | COMMUNITIES UNITED

Olga Bautsita | SOUTHEAST ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE

Dionne Baux | NATIONAL MAIN STREET

Libia Bianbi | ARTS ALLIANCE ILLINOIS

Randall Blakey | NEAR NORTH UNITY PROGRAM

Emily Blum | ADA25 ADVANCING LEADERSHIP

Karl Brinson | CHICAGO WESTSIDE NAACP

Chris Brown | SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT

Rashonda Brown

Georgio Burciaga | IGNITE CITIES

Jordan Campbell | PUBLIC IMAGE PARTNERSHIP N F P

Gerardo Cardenas | AARP

Rene Carmargo

Abraham Celio | UNIVERSIDAD POPULAR

Grace Chan McKibben | COALITION FOR A BETTER CHINESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Antwan Chandler | CLEANSTREET

Chandra Christmas Rouse | ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Ann Cibulskis | CDPH

Jennifer Clark | LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

Allison Clements | ILLINOIS HOUSING COUNCIL

Candace Coleman | ACCESS LIVING

Melvin Cox | BRIDGE CONSULTING

Malcolm Crawford | AAABNA, INC.

Meegan Czop | GREAT LAKES YARD

Lisa Daniels | DARREN B. EASTERLING CENTER FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Naomi Davis | BLACKS IN GREEN

Marta Delgado

Donald Dew | HABILITATIVE SERVICES

Lisa Dziekan | WORLD BUSINESS CHICAGO

Mary Edsey | ORGANIZER

Fabian Elliott | BLACK TECH MECCA

Carl Ellis

Anne Evens | ELEVATE ENERGY

LaQuandra Fair | GROWING HOME

Keisha Farmer-Smith | CHICAGO FREEDOM SCHOOL

Clifton Fowler

Melissa Franada

Terry Gant | THIRD COAST COMICS

Marvin Garcia | CAMPOS

Rocio Garcia | UNITED WORKING FAMILIES

Liz Gomez | CHICAGO ARTISTS COALITION

Stephanie Gomez | WEST SIDE UNITED

Veronica Gonzales | NHPF

Sylvia Gonzalez

Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi | CENTER FOR CHANGING LIVES

Dorothy Gregory | RPBA

Andrea Hall | ILLINOIS DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Broc Hansen

Keith Harley | CHICAGO LIGHTHOUSE

Natalie Harper

Monica Haslip | LITTLE BLACK PEARL

Alisa Herrera | FIFTH THIRD BANK

Bonita Holmes

Julie Horowitz-Jackson

Brad Hunt | HISTORIAN

Edie Jacobs | GTW INC.

Braxton Jenkins

Yusuf Jones | IMAN

Rose Joshua | CHICAGO SOUTHSIDE NAACP

Katie Kaluzny | GREEN ALLIANCE

Sokoni Karanja | CENTER FOR NEW HORIZONS

Rose Kenebrew | COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

Andy King | PRESENCE HEALTHCARE

Nicole LaPorte | EAT

K.C. Lau | AT PROPERTIES

Benneth Lee | NAEFI

Michele Lee

Anamaria Leon | GROWS COMMITTEE IN NORTH LAWNDALE

David Leopold | CITY TECH COLLABORATIVE

BJ Levy | UNITED FEDERATION OF MUSICIANS

Issac Lewis | NORTH LAWNDALE COMMUNITY NEWS

Sharon Lewis | MEADOWS EASTSIDE

Vee Likes | SAMUEL DEWITT PROCTOR CONFERENCE, INC.

Deborah Little

Jackie Loewe | SHERIDAN PARK CONSULTING; UPTOWN BOARD

Phyllis Logan | UNIVERSAL HOUSING

Katrina Lopez | ILLINOIS COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

Lorenz Lopez | FIELD MUSEUM

Johnna Lowe | CORPORATION FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Deloris Lucas | WE KEEP YOU ROLLIN'

Jess Lynch | IPHI

Gabrielle Lyon | ILLINOIS HUMANITIES

Alex Lyons | NAACP WESTSIDE

Pamela Maass | WICKER PARK BUCKTOWN CHAMBER

Nick Magrisso | OPTIMAL STRATEGIES, LLC

Paulina Martinez | CITY OF EVANSTON

Antonio Matthews | MARCH FOR MILLENNIALS

Dominica McBride | BECOME, INC

Tiffany McDowell | YWCA

Suzet McKinney | IMD ED

Troy McMillen | RESIDENT

Meida McNeal | PARK DISTRICT/HONEY POT PERFORMANCE

Gail Merrit | RESIDENT, FOUNDER GREENER SOUTH LOOP

Michelle Merritt | ADVOCATE

Diana Mireles | ADVOCATE

Phyllis Mitzen | SKYLINE VILLAGE CHICAGO

Maria Moon | CHICAGO AREA FAIR HOUSING ALLIANCE

Mary Morales Calderon | CHICAGO BIRTH WORKERS OF COLOR

Sandra Morales Mirque | UIC

Hubert Morgan | STANHOPE CONSULTING

Melissa Mosley

Jamil Muhammad | COMED

Jesus Nakamura

Crista Noel | WAPB

Katya Nuques | ENLACE CHICAGO

Kelly O'Brien | CHICAGO CENTRAL AREA COMMITTEE

Leslie Page-Piper | ORGANIZER/PLANNING CONSULTANT

John Paige | INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT

Kalindi Parikh | CHICAGO LOOP ALLIANCE

Renee Patten | EDGEWATER ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

AJ Patton | 548 CAPITAL & SOLAR CHICAGO FUND

Christine Perez Olsen | FARR ASSOCIATES

Phatal Perkins | ENGLEWOOD RISING

Tedd Peso | THE NIGHT MINISTRY

Kate Piatt Eckert | STEEP THEATRE

Juliana Pino | LVEJO

Carlil Pittman | GOOD KIDS, MAD CITY

Kate Polgar | RESIDENT, CARE FOR REAL

Greg Polman | CHICAGO LIGHT HOUSE; MPAC

Alex Poltorak | URBAN CANOPY, ENGLEWOOD

Sylvia Puente | LATINO POLICY FORUM

Aurelius Raines III | CITY COLLEGE STUDENT

Wynona Redmond | WYN-WIN COMMUNICATIONS

Andrea Reed | GREATER ROSELAND CHAMBER

Oboi Reed | EQUICITY

Guacolda Reyes | HISPANIC HOUSING DEV. CORP

Misty Richmond | CPS TEACHER

Summur Roberts | LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

Maurice Robinson | QUE FELLOW AND ORGANIZER

Nicole Robinson | GREATER CHICAGO FOOD DEPOSITORY

Stephen Robinson | NORTHWEST AUSTIN COUNCIL

Manny Rodriguez | REVOLUTION WORKSHOP

James Rudyk | NWSHC

Danielle Russell | OPENLANDS

Deondre Rutues | NORTHWEST AUSTIN COUNCIL

Jolene Saul | BRINSHORE

Jim Schwab | JIM SCHWAB CONSULTING

Shavion Scott | AUSTIN COMING TOGETHER

Anton Seals | GROW GREATER ENGLEWOOD

Wayne Segal | JAZZ SHOWCASE

Brenda Sheriff | POET/HISTORIAN/ACTIVIST

Tracey Showers

Pam Simaga

Iyana Simba | ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

Jonathan Solomon | SAIC

Adrian Soto | GREATER SOUTHWEST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Claudette Soto | D'SCOTO CONSTRUCTION

Eric Strickland

Mike Takada | JAPANESE AMERICAN SERVICE COMMITTEE

Dr. Tanesha House | MULTIFACETS, INC.

Evelyn Tapia | BRIGHTON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

Amika Tendaji | ACTION NOW INSTITUTE

Remel Terry | BRIGHT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Melissa Texcahua Reyes | LOGAN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Nik Theodore | UIC

Jacare Thomas | UMOJA CHICAGO

Debra Thompson | SOUTHWEST FEDERATION OF BLOCK CLUBS

Mika Thompson | COMMUNITY ATTORNEY

Jessica Torres | ESPERANZA HEALTH CENTER

Carlos Tortolero | LATINOS PROGRESSANDO

Maria Trawnski | MPAC

Branden Traylor

Tom Tresser | TIF ILLUMINATION PROJECT

Tonya Trice | SOUTH SHORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Justine Valas | ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE

Nicole Vasquez

LaSaia Wade | BRAVE SPACE ALLIANCE

Alvyn Walker | WINDSOR PARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

Dawn Walker

Sharif Walker | BETHEL NEW LIFE

Richard Wallace | EQUITY AND TRANSFORMATION

Cheryl Watson

Jackie Wiese Montesdeoca | NEIGHBORS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Eric Wilkins | BROKEN WINGGZ

Deborah Williams | COMMUNITY ORGANIZER

Eric Williams | SILVER ROOM

Sodiaqa Williams | SAFER FOUNDATION

Paula Wolff | ILLINOIS JUSTICE PROJECT

Kyra Woods | SIERRA CLUB

Terri Worman | RESIDENT

Jamie Wright | POST OFFICE WORKER

Jenny Yang | PHOENIX BEAN

Victoria Young | NATURALLY URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL INC.

Josh Zadikoff | CORNERSTONE RESTAURANT GROUP

Pillar Research Team Application Reviewers

Matt Adams | LEO BURNETT

Sonia Antolec | COOK COUNTY

Iván Arenas | CHICAGO UNITED FOR EQUITY

Pilar Audain-Jackson | TRUTH, RACIAL HEALING, AND TRANSFORMATION - GREATER CHICAGO

Katrina Balog | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Crystal Bell | DEPAUL UNIVERSITY (CHADDICK INST.)

Melissa Buenger | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Cindy Cambray | CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING

Tyra Carroll | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Maggie Cassidy | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Brian Daly | CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING

Margaret Decker | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE

Darlene Dugo | COOK COUNTY

Tiffany N. Ford | CHICAGO UNITED FOR EQUITY

Todd Fraley | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Jennie Fronczak | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Melody Geraci | ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ALLIANCE

Briana Gipson | RUDD RESOURCES

Sheila Grayer | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Laura Guitierrez | CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

Ken Gunn | COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Meg Gustafson | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Esther Gutierrez | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Kim Harrison | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Dean Malik Henfield | LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

Jennifer Herd | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Daniel Hertz | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

Leslé Honoré | CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD TECHNOLOGY

Katie Kaluzny | ILLINOIS GREEN ALLIANCE

Kindy Kruller | COOK COUNTY

Fran Learnahan | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Anna Lee | CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

Sonya Moore Lewis | RUDD CONSULTING

Ricardo Lopez | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

John MacDougall | ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

Louis Makarewicz | CHICAGO UNITED FOR EQUITY

Tony Manno | CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING

Rosemary McDonnell-Horita | LAVANT CONSULTING

Christina McGleam | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

JoAnn Newsome | COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Paul O'Connor | PUBLIC NARRATIVE

Jamie Osborne | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Heather Parrish | PIERCE FAMILY FOUNDATION

John Petrakis | SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

Roberto Requejo | ELEVATED CHICAGO

Bradley Roback | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Ruth Rosas | CONSORTIUM TO LOWER OBESITY IN CHICAGO CHILDREN

Lesley Roth | LAMAR JOHNSON

Kimberley Rudd | RUDD RESOURCES

Jon Schmidt | LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

William Shih | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE

Jamie Simone | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Stacey Sutton | UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CHICAGO

Kimberly Taylor | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Eiliesh Tuffy | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Angela Waller | ADVOCATE HEALTHCARE

Lilliane Webb | RUDD CONSULTING

Aubrey Wells | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Kareem Wells | K.W.E.O.

Kyra Woods | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE

Todd Wyatt | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Phase II Consultant Team

Research Leads/Contributors

Ranadip Bose | SB FRIEDMAN
Tony Canepa | SB FRIEDMAN
Emilia Chico | CHICO CONSULTING GROUP
Sophie Chishty | GINGKO PLANNING & DESIGN
Alejandro DiPrizio | SB FRIEDMAN
Lance Dismukes | SB FRIEDMAN
Wesley Epplin | HEALTH & MEDICINE POLICY RESEARCH GROUP
Cindy Fish | FISH TRANSPORTATION GROUP
Perry Georgopoulos | GINKGO PLANNING & DESIGN
Elizabeth Ginsberg | SB FRIEDMAN
Anezka Gocova | LAMAR JOHNSON COLLABORATIVE
Terry Hogan | SB FRIEDMAN
Will Holland | SB FRIEDMAN
Fran Lefor Rood | SB FRIEDMAN
Lesley Roth | LAMAR JOHNSON COLLABORATIVE
Jameson Skaife | LAMAR JOHNSON COLLABORATIVE
Elizabeth Schuh | SB FRIEDMAN
Alison Zehr | BOTA: BUSINESS OF THE ARTS

Facilitation Leads/Contributors

Katrina Balog | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN
Ally Brisbin | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN
Romina Castillo | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN
Briana Gipson | RUDD RESOURCES
Courtney Kashima | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN
Geo Lawrence | RUDD RESOURCES
Sonya Lewis | RUDD RESOURCES
Abigail Rose | ALL TOGETHER
Kimberley Rudd | RUDD RESOURCES
Marisa Schulz | ALL TOGETHER
Rachael Smith | ALL TOGETHER
Marissa Strassel | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN
Lilliane P. Webb | RUDD RESOURCES

Writers and Document Design

Melissa M. Ballate | BLUE DARING
Riley Brady | BLUE DARING
Sophie Lucido Johnson | OFFICE OF MODERN COMPOSITION
Raghav Rao | OFFICE OF MODERN COMPOSITION
Jill Riddell | OFFICE OF MODERN COMPOSITION

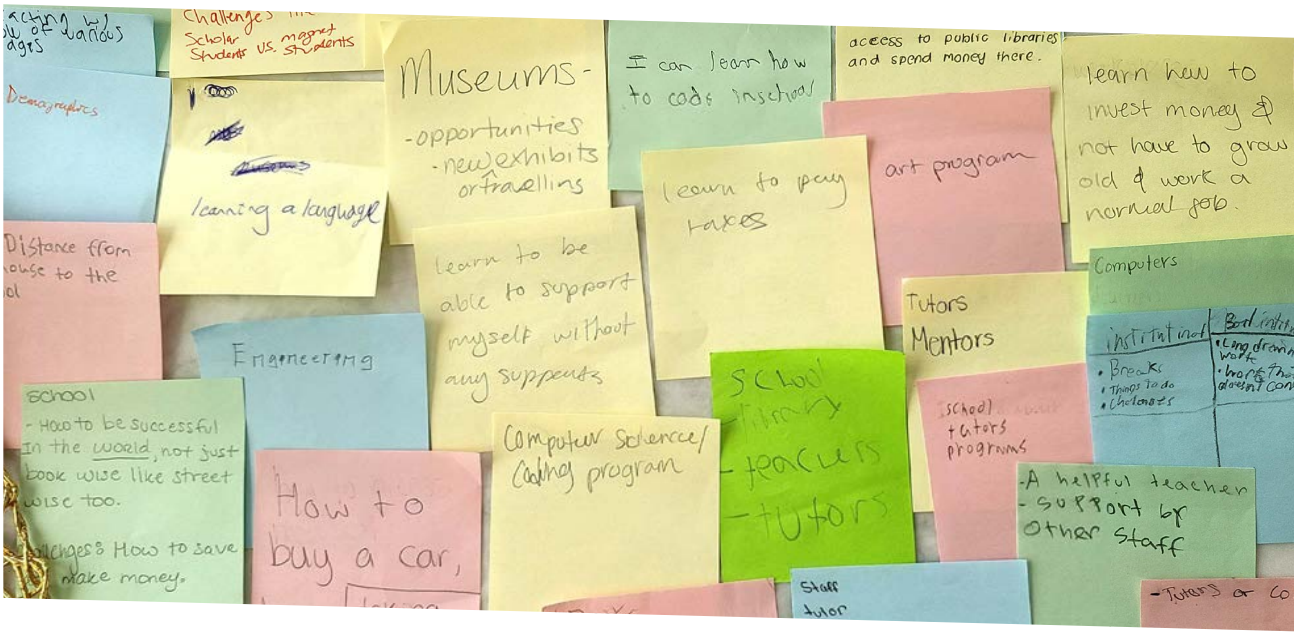
Documenters

Archit Baskaran | CITY BUREAU
Alex Kelly Berman | CORTICO
Karmeisha Boyd | CITY BUREAU
Aryssa Burton | CITY BUREAU
Susan Carlotta Ellis | CITY BUREAU
India Daniels | CITY BUREAU
Leon Downs | CITY BUREAU
Helena Duncan | CITY BUREAU
Ebony Ellis | CITY BUREAU
Natalie Frazier | CITY BUREAU
William Garcia | CITY BUREAU
Collin Hazlett | CITY BUREAU
Andrew Herrera | CITY BUREAU
Darryl Holliday | CITY BUREAU
Daniela Jaime | CITY BUREAU
Maggie Macpherson | CITY BUREAU
Monica Mosching | CITY BUREAU
Jonah Nink | CITY BUREAU
Mrinalini Pandey | CITY BUREAU
Ryland Pietras | CITY BUREAU
Ayesha Riaz | CITY BUREAU
Erin Rusmi | CITY BUREAU

Benjy Sachs | CITY BUREAU
Nalani Saito | CITY BUREAU
Ahmad Sayles | CITY BUREAU
Sonal Soni | CITY BUREAU
Isabelle Stroobandt | CITY BUREAU
Jason Tompkins | CITY BUREAU
Shabaka Verna | CITY BUREAU
Karen Viado | CITY BUREAU
Megan Wadin | CITY BUREAU
Ayanna Watkins | CITY BUREAU
Stephen Yoshida | CITY BUREAU

Artist-Organizer Team

Quenna Lené Barrett
Wisdom Baty
Ireashia M. Bennett
Miles Blakely
Parrish Brown, Jr.
Aaliyah Christina
Enneréssa "Reesie" Davis
Jo de Presser
Jordan Evangelista
Natalie Frazier
Donna Gary
Alyssa Gregory
Yaritza Guillen
Adia Ivey
Mechiya Jamison
Aisha Jean-Baptiste
JeeYeun Lee
Jennifer Ligaya
Cat Mahari
Meida Teresa McNeal
Michelle E.L. Merritt
Enrique Morales
Pearl Ramsey
Gloria I. Rivera
Kimeco Roberson
Chris Saint Martin
Tony Santiago
Vanessa Stokes
Mike Tekhen Strode
Jacob Watson
Alexandria Willis
Bree Wright



Pillar Research Teams

Arts & Culture

Erin Harkey | **CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL EVENTS (CO-CHAIR)**

Melanie Wang | **VOLUNTEER (CO-CHAIR)**

Alison Zehr | **BOTA: BUSINESS OF THE ARTS (RESEARCH LEAD)**

Rachael Smith | **ALL TOGETHER (FACILITATION LEAD)**

Krystal Amevor | VOLUNTEER

Teresita Aviles-Bailey | COMMUNITY PARTNER, CHICAGO CULTURAL ALLIANCE

Toni D. Baliey | VOLUNTEER

Lynn Basa | VOLUNTEER, MILWAUKEE AVENUE ALLIANCE

Devonta Boston | COMMUNITY PARTNER, MY BLOCK MY HOOD MY CITY

Cathy Breitenbach | CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Julie Burros | CHICAGO METROPOLITAN AGENCY FOR PLANNING

Kevin Corbett | COMMUNITY PARTNER, CHICAGO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Julia de Bettencourt | CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Kathleen Dickhut | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Jeremy Dunn | CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Monica Felix | COMMUNITY PARTNER, CHICAGO CULTURAL ALLIANCE

Anezka Gocova | CONSULTANT TEAM, LJC

Max Grinnell | VOLUNTEER

Kim Jay | VOLUNTEER

Jarol Jonathan Rendon Jimenez | VOLUNTEER

Gabriela Jirasek | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Kristin Larsen | VOLUNTEER

Sydney Murphy | COMMUNITY PARTNER, CHICAGO CULTURAL ALLIANCE

Maritza Nazario | COMMUNITY PARTNER, EN LAS TABLAS

Jamie Nelson | COMMUNITY PARTNER, CHICAGO GAY MEN'S CHORUS

Rose Olea | COMMUNITY PARTNER, CHICAGO GAY MEN'S CHORUS - APPLICATION CONTACT

Dawn Posey | VOLUNTEER

Natasha Tarpley | VOLUNTEER

Clevan Tucker, Jr. | VOLUNTEER

Henry Wishcamper | VOLUNTEER

Ferhat Zerin | CONSULTANT TEAM

Economic Development

Lynnette McRae | **VOLUNTEER (CO-CHAIR)**

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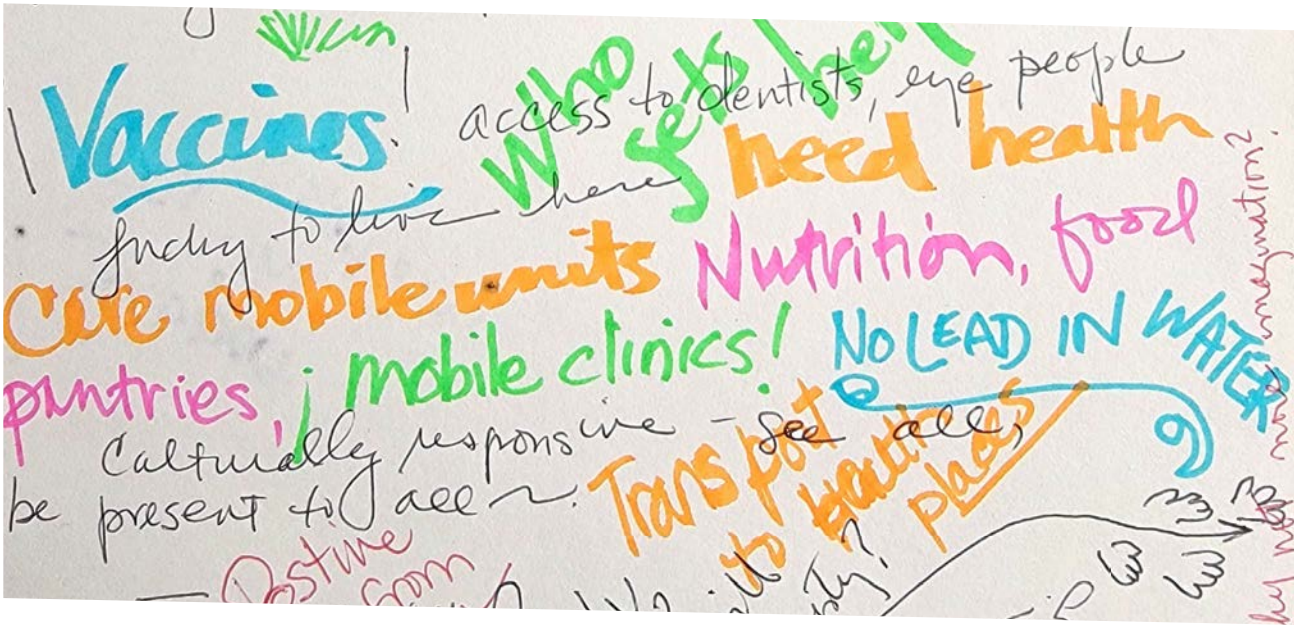

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Courtney Kashima | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Meida McNeal | HONEY POT PERFORMANCE

Lesley Roth | LAMAR JOHNSON COLLABORATIVE

Tony Santiago | HONEY POT PERFORMANCE

William Stewart | UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Photography

Walter Mitchell | CITY OF CHICAGO, SUPERVISING PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNICIAN

Patrick Pyszka | CITY OF CHICAGO, PRINCIPAL PHOTOGRAPHER

Samuel Sotelo | CITY OF CHICAGO, DIGITAL ASSET COORDINATOR

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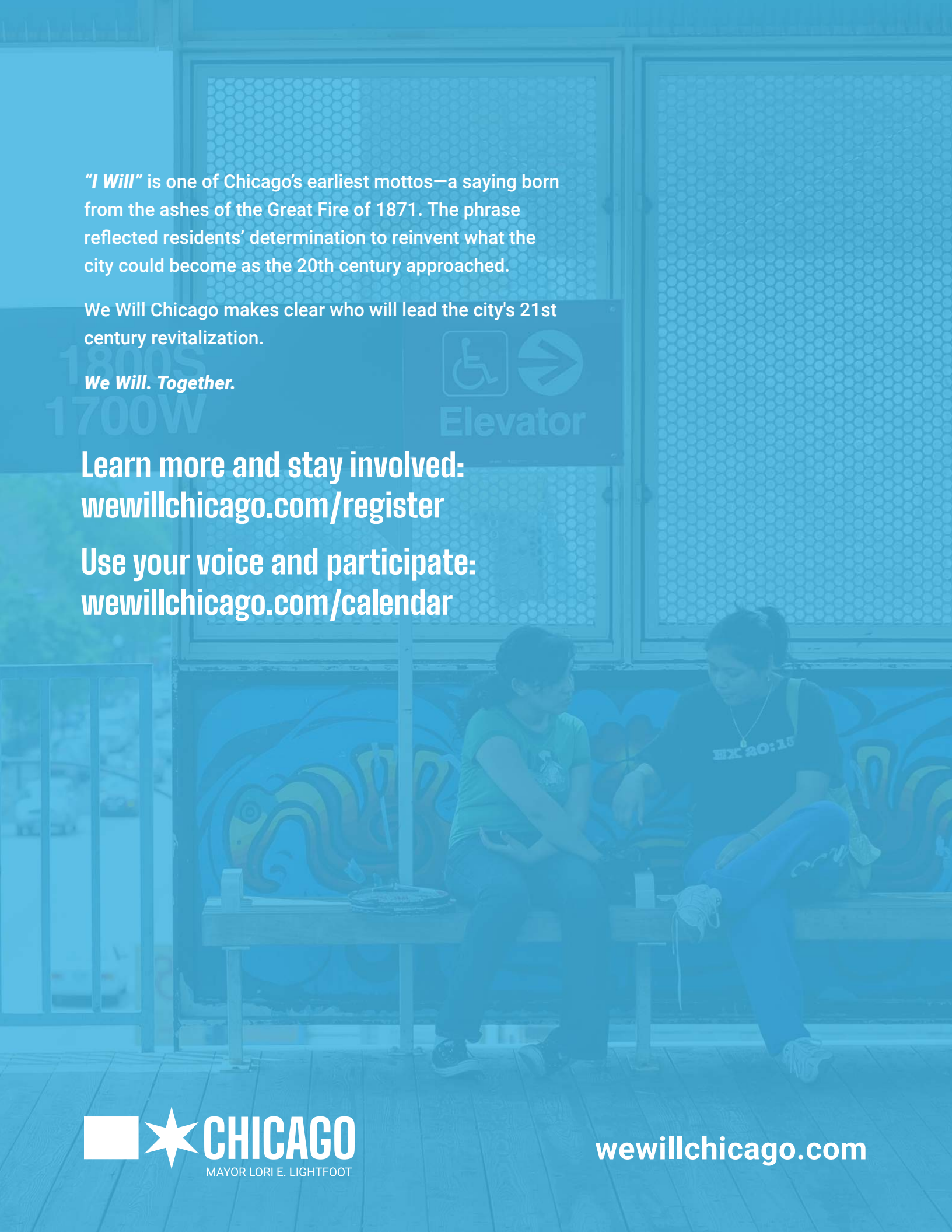
*** A descriptive group name, not an organization*

ANDRE



"I Will" is one of Chicago's earliest mottos—a saying born from the ashes of the Great Fire of 1871. The phrase reflected residents' determination to reinvent what the city could become as the 20th century approached.

We Will Chicago makes clear who will lead the city's 21st century revitalization.

We Will. Together.

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