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Environment, Climate + Energy Meeting 10

February 22, 2022, 6:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Stephen Yoshida

ATTENDEES

- Marissa Strassel
- Lesley Roth
- Pericles Georgopoulos
- Tomi Moore
- Bradley Roback
- Bob Megquier
- Mike Tomas
- Robert Weinstock
- Jared Patton
- Marcelina Pedraza
- Heather Jensen
- Tomas de'Medici
- Michele Davies
- Sean Wiedel
- Olga Bautista
- Angela Tovar
- Anthony Tindall
- Grant Ullrich
- Grant Ullrich
- Anne Nicklin
- Rohit Agarwal
- Matt Freer
- Shannon Madden
- Frank Zhu



MEETING GOAL

Review the city's edits to the guiding questions and begin to develop the Environment, Climate + Energy pillar's policy framework, with a focus on the metrics available for studying and assessing policy outcomes.

WHERE WE ARE

Step 1

We Are*Setting the Stage*

Step 2

We Have and Need*Develop A Policy Toolkit*

Step 3

We Will*Set Policy Framework***KEY TAKEAWAYS****1**

The working group broke into two teams to develop policy proposals around Guiding Questions 3 and 4. This entailed reviewing and giving feedback on edits the city made to the policy objectives that breakout groups worked on at the last session.

2

Working group members considered the wider context in which their policy recommendations will exist. For example, they discussed the historical context of low participation in the Blue Bin recycling program and whether regulating emerging industries like urban agriculture would create undue burdens on small start-ups.

3

At multiple points during the discussion and revision process, suggestions were made which were very similar or identical to existing or forthcoming state, county or city policies. The group used worksheets that included examples of plans from other cities but did not reference existing policies in Chicago, Cook County or Illinois.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“[T]he city has fallen short ... Our diversion goals are sad and we can be doing a lot more to create a more circular system. That’s not a controversial statement ... [T]he city has relied on a traditional blue cart and black cart system for far too long and hasn’t diverted enough resources and personnel to new systems. Any time we see new systems in place, we see them get cut first. ”

Angela Tovar | City of Chicago, Chief Sustainability Officer

“This is an anecdote but I think it speaks to the complexity of increasing recycling. I worked at Ukrainian Village Mariano’s and at the end of the day we would ... throw everything in the trash—not because we didn’t want to recycle, but because Mariano’s was usually understaffed across departments. In a lot of spots there aren’t internal structures or incentives [to recycle].”

Tomas de’Medici | Resource Innovations, Outreach Specialist

“Composting is an example where the city and the state’s regulatory frameworks have made it really hard for small composters to get started in the city.”

Robert Weinstock | Abrams Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law

“We should make it cheaper to do good things, not more expensive to do bad things.”

Robert Weinstock | Abrams Environmental Law Clinic at the University of Chicago Law School, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law

NOTES

Opening

- Focusing on developing policy for Guiding Questions 3 and 4
- The city did a round of edits on the pillar's Guiding Questions/Goal Statements and Objectives. They recommend using less jargon and technical language so that the ideas the working group generates are accessible to the general public. The city will be conducting a public survey in March.

Pillar Metrics and Data Presentation by Lesley Roth

- Olga Bautista is analyzing metrics of existing policies.
- How do we know when a policy is successful? How do we hold people accountable for implementation? How much progress have we made?
- She gives examples of effective metrics that quantify and show trends that policy seeks to affect, such as decarbonization, walkability of neighborhoods, job creation, gross domestic product (GDP) growth, water conservation, and green space access relative to mental health outcomes.

Community Partner Presentation

- The [Garfield Park Community Council](#) was formed in 2005 after a community planning process through the Garfield Park Conservatory.
- Has held a [local produce market](#) for the last ten years.
- Working with [The Hatchery](#) business incubator and [Coalition Food Hall](#)
- Collaborating with NeighborSpace on an eco-orchard as part of the city Department of Planning and Development's [Resilient Corridors Project](#).
- Also working on housing affordability, missing middle house-flipping, equitable transit-oriented development (ETOD), [Just Cause](#) for eviction, [C40 Reinventing Cities' Garfield Green](#) carbon-neutral housing development.

Policy Break Out Group Work: Guiding Question 3

- City guidelines recommend starting with measurable outcomes and then developing policy levers to affect those outcomes. For example, the city can leverage its buying power to support sustainable products and services, then track outcomes in terms of new jobs and economic output.
- Regarding public/private partnerships: What sort of a compliance framework and standards can the city create for accountability? The [2008 Climate Action Plan](#) set a goal for 90% of post-consumer material to be recycled but current levels are less than 10%. It's one thing for a policy to be created but it's another thing to have the personnel, enforcement and financial incentives in place to ensure that the policy is actually implemented.
- Incentivize pilot programs for companies with headquarters in Chicago.

- Study how regulation helps or harms emerging industries. For example, composting regulation has made it more challenging for new, smaller businesses to succeed.
- An extended producer responsibility program is being developed in partnership with the city and state.
- The team discussed labeling (similar to cigarettes) to increase recycling. Jared Patton points out that a big reason Chicagoans don't recycle is because they don't have faith in the city's current system. Messaging should communicate that "we realize it hasn't been working, here's what we have done to improve."
 - Reckoning with the city's past role in policy outcomes and their effect on public sentiments is crucial to moving forward.
- An example of how the city can implement policies that encourage good behaviors rather than punishing bad ones: In Bloomington, garbage collection costs money and it's picked up every other week. Recycling is free and weekly.
 - Punishing bad behavior is not always helpful when it comes to sustainability because many of the systems required for compliance (both in the city's power to enforce and the private actor's ability to comply) simply do not exist or are under-developed.
- Robert Weinstock raises Pratchett's "boots theory": Buying a more expensive pair of boots saves wealthy people money in the long run because the boots last longer. But if you can't afford the upfront cost of a more expensive pair of boots, you'll end up spending more money because the cheaper boots are not as durable.
 - This is an important point when setting policy because it underscores that some people only have the unsustainable choices available to them. Therefore, in some cases the policy lever should focus on market makers and producers, rather than burdening end users with the task of recycling or sustainability.
- Multi-year city grants would give smaller organizations greater capacity to focus on their actual work, rather than the grant-writing cycle.
- Frank Zhu mentions that a community farm near him is being bulldozed to make way for development. How can the city make land more accessible and secure for smaller organizations? Resources exist (such as the Chicago Park District and NeighborSpace offering gardens in parks and the Vacant Lot Program) but are more commonly used for garden plots than urban agriculture. Also, the cost of land and soil remediation can be a barrier.
- Should Chicago follow New York's lead in banning natural gas in new construction or make it harder to install new natural gas lines? These are infrastructure questions that have long-term ramifications.
- Several suggested policies are in-development or in-progress on the city, county, or state level.

RESOURCES**RESILIENT CHICAGO**

[A Plan for Inclusive Growth and a Connected City](#)

ONENYC 2050

[New York City's "strategy to secure our city's future against the challenges of today and tomorrow"](#)

BYLAW 20000: EDMONTON CITY PLAN

[A policy framework frequently referenced by pillar members](#)

CHICAGO PACE

[Program for owners and developers of commercial properties to get financing for energy efficiency, sustainability and renewable energy infrastructure](#)

CLEAN ENERGY (CPACE) PROGRAM

[A Cook County program that is similar to Chicago Pace](#)

CITY PRESS RELEASE

[Chicago City Council approves ordinance to increase Chicago's electric vehicle readiness](#)

KEEPING FOOD OUT OF THE LANDFILL: POLICY IDEAS FOR STATES AND LOCALITIES

[Link to report prepared by Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic](#)

CITY OF CHICAGO EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (ETOD) POLICY PLAN

[Link to report executive summary](#)

CHICAGO 2021 WASTE STRATEGY

[A waste and materials management plan](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Community partners from the Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF) were slated to present today but had to postpone for next session.
- Working group members will continue to think of examples and precedents for policy frameworks and metrics to share with the group.
- The next pillar meeting is scheduled for March 22, 2022, 6 to 8 p.m.