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## Arts + Culture Meeting #12

April 25, 2022, 04:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Sonal Soni

### ATTENDEES

- Rachael Smith
- Melanie Wang
- Kim Jay
- Enrique Morales
- Krystal Amevor
- Abigail Rose
- Amanda Carlson
- Kristin Larsen
- Peggy Stewart
- Max Grinnell
- Julie Burros
- Alison Zehr
- Maritza Nazario
- Erin Harkey
- Wisdom Baty
- Gabriela Jirasek
- Henry Wishcamper
- Amanda Carlson
- Monica Felix



## MEETING GOAL

*This meeting's primary objective is to refine policies regarding the pillar's remaining goals. Setting this policy framework and assessing the pillar's performance thus far is the third out of fourth step in the We Will Chicago process. Today, participants incorporate additional community feedback and craft policies under an HREIA lens (Health and Racial Equity Impact Assessment).*

## 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

Goals and their respective objectives and policies should be further refined before the initial pillar report drafts are made. Areas to focus on are underrepresented neighborhoods, disabled individuals and youth.

2

While it's important to implement new cultural programs, it is equally integral to strengthen existing structures. The Chicago Mural Registry, which identifies significant art spaces across the city, is one existing art and cultural program that was mentioned in today's meeting.

3

We Will Chicago (WWC) Pillar members highlighted the need for communication and collaboration between the city and local artists. For example, there are instances of City workers painting over existing murals and public art during infrastructure construction. Increasing communication between these two groups would help preserve significant community sites.

## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“We created the mural registry a couple of years ago in direct response to the whitewashing of mural assets by [the Chicago Department of] Streets and Sanitation. There is a process there. [Refining that objective] is also acknowledging and strengthening an existing [structure], not just the creation of new [ones].”*

**Erin Harkey** | Commissioner, Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

“All of our hard work over the past year is going to be incorporated and presented and used throughout the summer and beyond as the city collects feedback and prepares for the plan’s implementation.”

**Alison Zehr** | Nonprofit management consultant and principal, Business of the Arts

“A lot of the feedback from the initial round [indicated] that the policy recommendations are still too vague and require some more thought. Over the last few weeks, we’ve been working on refining the language to make sure it has more meat on the bones and looking at the draft language as well as the ideas to [revise] the objectives and policies to make sure they can stand on their own.”

**Amanda Carlson** | Cultural planner and independent consultant, working with the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE)

“We can expand and strengthen the existing programs as well as develop new ones. I also think that finding mechanisms to fund the preservation of artworks in places is slightly separate from funding to celebrate those spaces ... I feel like celebrating and preserving are slightly different, and I feel like there's sort of a new piece—which is new artwork that engages with historically significant artwork.”

**Henry Wishcamper** | Director of community development, Urban Juncture Foundation

## NOTES

- **Welcome and consent**
- **Advisory Committee Updates**
  - Melanie Wang and Amanda Carlson presented the Advisory Committee report, which includes updates specific to the Arts and Culture pillar. There are two main points to the report, the first being “counteracting cultural displacement.” The report asks, “How can we address the erasure of local culture in communities across Chicago?” For example, Black and Latinx communities are losing their artistic and cultural heritage due to gentrification and depopulation, a problem that affects immigrant enclaves as well. One suggestion in the report is to develop community-informed programs that celebrate and preserve artworks and sites of historical significance.
  - The second point of the report deals with improving collaboration between entities. For example, murals near transit stops are sometimes painted over by city workers during infrastructure updates. A proposed solution is establishing a process to ensure coordination and transparency across all city departments and partners.
  - The report also includes general comments as to how a health and racial equity impact assessment (HREIA) framework will be used to evaluate policy recommendations and incorporated into the long term implementation of the We Will Chicago plan. One way the WWC plan will address this is to create another pillar on Civic and Community Engagement.
  - Another general comment states that pillar texts should include and highlight the contributions of disabled individuals in the planning process. Arts and Culture pillar objective 1.2 addresses this: “Decreasing barriers that have prevented access to city funding for creatives and arts and culture organizations, prioritizing racial, gender disability, geographic, and other equity considerations.”
  - The third primary general comment of the report includes implementing recommendations from community partner sessions. The Advisory Committee suggests reviewing notes from previous sessions to ensure all ideas are reflected in the pillar’s goals, objectives, and policies.
- **We Will Chicago Plan Outline**
  - Alison Zehr presented updates and steps of the We Will Chicago Framework plan. The framework plan means the core of the document, the goals, and the objectives provide the framework for future development and implementation of policies, programs, and procedures. Currently, the drafting of a plan document is underway, and pillar members will have the opportunity to review the draft during the next pillar meeting.
  - The plan will contain an introductory section that includes the pre-planning process and the work that was done to assemble the pillar teams. It will include a history of Chicago planning and a historical reckoning section to acknowledge inequities the plan is aiming to overcome and address.

- The plan will also introduce the pillar's two principles and five themes, which have guided the meeting's discussions. From there, the document will introduce each of the eight pillars (including the recent addition of the Civic and Community Engagement pillar).
  - Each pillar will have an introduction with context and driving issues that will include some of the most relevant data and metrics that have been shared across meetings. Then, the plan will present each pillar's goals and objectives.
  - Lastly, there will be a resource and reference section that will include a glossary, a list of collaborations, and how to access the past plans that were referenced. Details of the framework outline will be revisited in the next pillar meeting as well.
  - The foundation of this plan rests on the guiding questions that were asked and agreed upon in prior pillar meetings. Those questions were made into declarative statements which are now the pillar's current goals. The objectives that pillar members helped create further describe those goals. The goals and objectives have been edited for clarity while retaining the intent because these are what the vast majority of Chicagoans will read and comment on starting in June 2022.
  - Using the results of public input in June, the Framework Plan will be amended along with the goals and objectives. The actionable part of the framework plan will be presented to the Chicago Plan Commission for adoption with an estimated date of January 2023.
  - Today, pillar members will work on a separate document that focuses on the policies they've developed. There will be a web version that will be fully accessible and mobile responsive to the public, presenting the policies in the context of the individual pillars. It will provide opportunities for engagement and feedback which will inform future implementation.
  - All of the in-depth notes on implementation, strategy, program ideas, themes from previous conversations, and the pillar Google documents will be incorporated into a single document and posted on the We Will Chicago website as a PDF. Throughout the summer of 2022, the City is going to kick off a full scale multimedia engagement effort to gather feedback on the goals, objectives and the policy ideas.
- **Full Group Policy Refinement**
    - Goal 1 (supporting the resiliency of a diverse creative workforce) and goal 2 (creating and sustaining investment in arts and culture organizations that are equitably distributed and driven by community needs) have been merged. The revised Goal 1 now reads, "support the resiliency of the creative sector—its workers, organizations, and businesses – toward the benefit of a healthy and vibrant city."
    - Pillar members spent the majority of this meeting discussing the pillar's next three goals, including goal 2: "engage artists and cultural organizations to advance the quality of life in all Chicago communities."
      - Amanda Carlson asked, "How are arts and culture central to the quality of life in Chicago and how are arts and culture being resourced in its intersection within the creative sector, but also other fields as well?"

- Pillar members discussed the importance of looking at neighborhood investment, creative businesses and cultural spaces, and then really prioritizing investments in historically under-resourced community areas. Pillar members used the “Menti” platform to collaborate on refining the different goals. Pillar members also used Menti to vote on which policies to further discuss in today’s meeting.
- Pillar members worked to further refine two policies under goal 2:
  - Embedding artists into city departments and other agencies to integrate creative thinking into neighborhood projects
  - Developing community-informed programs that celebrate and preserve artworks and places that have historical and community significance.
  - “How can we make things more visible?” asked Krystal Amevor.
  - Amevor noted that community information is a great avenue, such as posting QR codes that link to information about the neighborhood’s history and culture.
- Goal 3: “Ensure all Chicagoans have access to robust, relevant, and joyful arts education and creative workforce opportunities at every stage of their lives.”
  - Pillar members voted to further refine the policy framework under objective 3.2: “expand professional and technical support to artists and art organizations providing arts education already embedded within neighborhoods across Chicago.”
  - Pillar members suggested defining the “who” this policy refers to.
  - Enrique Morales highlighted the importance of inclusivity, specifically including areas of the city into the framework that often receive little payoff. “What organizations in different parts of town are expending a lot of is social capital ... and to repeatedly not get funds cycle after cycle, you start losing social capital ... It’s doing more harm than anything else because the language that exists—despite saying that these programs are open to all across the city—it just isn’t reaching ... That nuance of trust-building within the programs and this particular language within policies is incredibly important.”
- The last goal discussed in the meeting is goal 4: “Promote awareness of Chicago’s arts and culture assets across all Chicago communities and to those beyond the city’s borders.”
  - Pillar members voted to refine policy C under objective 4.1: “Establish a City-wide campaign to inform residents on the role the arts play in Chicago and how to access them.”
  - Pillar members discuss ways to reach youth audiences across the city, like utilizing social media platforms and creating a city tourism website that includes neighborhood arts organizations.

- Lastly, pillar members also voted to refine policy B under objective 4.2: “Foster increased collaboration and partnerships between arts organizations and cultural institutions in different neighborhoods, drawing on their diverse strengths and perspectives.”
  - Pillar members discuss the importance of creating ways for collaboration between all of these different neighborhoods and within the same ones. Members also discussed using transportation nodes (such as Metra, CTA, O’Hare and Midway airports) to promote arts and cultural programming.
- There are no questions for the Q&A/Closeout portion.

#### RESOURCES

##### **CHICAGO MURAL REGISTRY**

[The Mural Registry is a growing list of murals and street art produced on private and public property in Chicago.](#)

##### **HOW MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES TURNED MAINTENANCE WORK INTO ART**

[An article about Mierle Laderman Ukeles, an artist-in-residence with the New York City Department of Sanitation. Pillar members discussed the relationship between streets and sanitation and arts and culture in New York, and how to forge similar relationships in Chicago.](#)

##### **BOSTON ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE (AIR)**

[A pillar member mentioned this program, which pairs artists with with City departments to reimagine a more equitable and creative Boston.](#) This is another relationship Chicago could draw inspiration from. Music Lives Here is commissioned by Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). A pillar member sent this link in the Zoom chat as an instance of art and culture collaboration between the City and its residents.

##### **MUSIC LIVES HERE**

[A multimedia project commissioned by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events \(DCASE\) that showcases Chicago’s musical history and culture](#)

#### NEXT STEPS

- By June 2022, the pillar will produce a report for the Advisory Committee to review. These reports will include suggested policy frameworks along with identity performance metrics.
- An updated document will be shared with pillar members a week from this meeting, which gives members the chance to give any last comments or feedback for the upcoming pillar report.
- There is one last working meeting on June 6, where members will present refined pillar policies, review drafts and finalize pillar reports.