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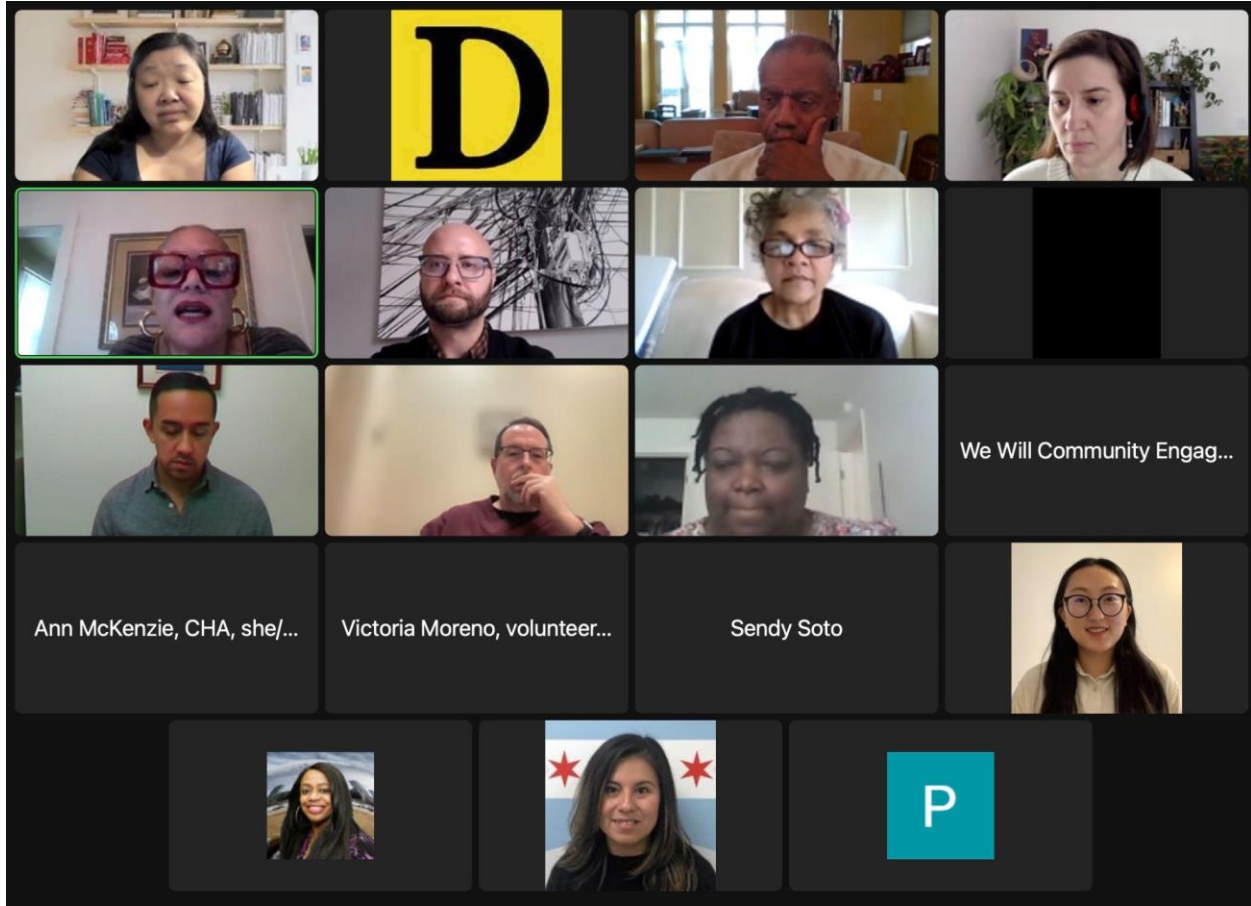
Housing + Neighborhoods Meeting #12

April 28, 2022, 10:00AM | 2 hours

Documented by: Archit Baskaran

ATTENDEES

- Fran Rood
- Jerome Wade
- Grace Chan McKibben
- Jackie Paige
- Sendy Soto
- Dalia Aragon
- David Collier King
- Sonya Lewis
- Jameson Skaife
- Ann McKenzie
- Vivian Zhang
- Patricia Fron
- Juan Luna Nunez
- Linda Young
- Juan Sebastian Arias
- Myk Snider
- Victoria Moreno
- Freda Madison
- Enrique Castillo
- Michelle Merritt



A Zoom meeting grid with 15 participants. The participants are arranged in a grid with some empty spaces. The participants are:

- Row 1: A woman with dark hair, a yellow square with a black letter 'D', a man with glasses, and a woman with dark hair.
- Row 2: A woman with red glasses, a man with glasses, a woman with glasses, and a black square.
- Row 3: A man, a man, a woman, and a black square with the text "We Will Community Engag..."
- Row 4: A black square with the text "Ann McKenzie, CHA, she/...", a black square with the text "Victoria Moreno, volunteer...", a black square with the text "Sendy Soto", and a woman with glasses.
- Row 5: A woman, a woman with a Chicago flag background, and a teal square with a white letter 'P'.

MEETING GOAL

Review the current language for goals 3, 4 and 5 in the We Will Chicago Housing + Neighborhoods Pillar document.

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**

Pillar members received an overview of the We Will Chicago Framework Plan—a report summarizing findings from pillar meetings including policies, objectives and goals. Some pillar members surfaced questions and concerns about ensuring the plan will be implemented. As of now, the plan is going to be voted on by the Plan Commission.

2

Many pillar members spoke to the recurring theme of inclusion – from better inclusion of people with disabilities in Chicago housing policy overall, to inclusion and recognition of Black, Latinx, Native American/Indigenous, and Asian-American communities in the pillar Objectives.

3

The research team plans to update the pillar document to reflect feedback from various stakeholders (residents, pillar members, city officials), compile all goals and objectives for wider distribution, and meet on June 9th for a second review. They will also loop in the Research Team to refine all policies prior to the entire We Will Chicago meeting on June 28th.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“Just the rampant amount of very severe safety conditions we have within our rental housing... is really troubling. We rank some of the worst on some of the housing safety standards across the country... Are we going to invest in the health of our housing? ”

Patricia Fron | Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance, Co-Executive Director

“It’s just not efficient, whether there’s education [campaigns for Housing Choice Vouchers] or not. The waitlist is ridiculous, communicating with CHA sometimes is too complicated, and I feel that people won’t take advantage of it when the system itself is not efficient.”

Dalia Aragon | North River Commission, Economic Development and Housing Coordinator

“You can’t isolate housing from neighborhood. All of these things are so closely linked – they all have to be addressed together.”

Fran Rood | SB Friedman Development Advisors, Senior Vice President

“We can write policies all day long. But if they do not enact the policies, what good is it? These residents have been calling, calling, calling, and then this resident took it upon herself to hold that rent in a way to force the landlord to make the repairs... Somebody was in place, but it failed these residents. So something needs to be done where actual policies are enforced.”

Jackie Paige | We Will Chicago Housing and Neighborhoods pillar, Volunteer

“There are neighborhoods that are not as accessible to transit-oriented development where growth and density are still needed.”

Michelle Meritt | Artist-Organizer

NOTES

1. **The pillar broadly discussed the next steps for the We Will Chicago Framework Plan.**
 - a. This document summarizes the Goals & Objectives of each Pillar involved in the We Will Chicago project. Fran Rood walks through the framework plan's contents which will include introductions, overviews of pillars and resources. There are three "products" available online: the plan document, the policy ideas and supporting content including notes from pillar meetings.
 - i. The specifics of the plan were not discussed nor were specifics of implementation; however, the pillar discussed that the next step for this Framework Plan would be to submit it to the Chicago Plan Commission for adoption. There are plans to do more engagement in the summer of 2022, when community members will be able to provide input on objectives.
 1. Pillar members surfaced questions and concerns about the lack of specificity in implementing the plan beyond going to the Plan Commission for a vote. Rood states that there will be an update in Meeting #13.
2. **The Committee discussed some of the specific Goals and Objectives listed in this Plan.**
 - a. First, the pillar discussed Objective 3.1: Preserve and Maintain Existing Affordable Housing Across all 77 Community Areas.
 - i. pillar members clarified one of the policies within the Objective: to "develop a pilot program to proactively identify residential properties that may have common issues, using a predictive approach with modernized data." She noted that prior data suggest that relying solely on tenants to report property condition issues can result in evictions, rent increases, or harassment. Here, the policy goal was to have the Department of Buildings + City of Chicago use the data they have on property use and come up with a proactive approach to rental inspections, using data to predict which properties may have issues and thereafter use that to spur inspections.
 - ii. Patricia Fron, another pillar member, expressed frustration at this point, noting that proactive inspections were advocated for over the past 10 years.
 1. Next steps:
 - a. The Department of Buildings had some concerns with this proposal, and the pillar expressed interest in showcasing the Department's concerns as public feedback on this policy goal.
 - b. Grace Chan McKibben noted that low-income housing may require the greatest amount of upkeep due to being potentially identified via inspections as in need of help. Therefore, Grace suggested that the pillar ought to come up with a program to increase resources and support for homeowners or landlords in covering the repairs. Patricia Fron reinforced similar sentiments after noting that Chicago housing ranks some of the worst on national housing standards, and noted that action is necessary, not simply an inspection-based plan.
 - b. The pillar next discussed Objective 3.2, specifically the phrase "Housing Typologies by Right."
 - i. pillar members explained that housing typologies are the different formats/types of housing (ex. Single-family homes, townhomes, row homes, small vs. large apartment buildings), and "by Right" means that a developer

could come in and be allowed under the Zoning code to build without getting Zoning approval. The context behind this was that right now, many parts of the city only allow developers to build single-family homes by Right in residential districts. The goal of this objective is to allow for a greater variety of housing typologies without having to go through an expensive, uncertain, and unnecessarily bureaucratic rezoning process.

1. Linda Young expressed concern at the notion of a developer coming into an area and simply deciding what kind of building they wanted to construct. She expressed that further discussion was necessary on this point.
- ii. The pillar next discussed Objective 3.3: to expand housing assistance for marginalized residents, especially very low-income residents and people with disabilities. At present, the goal is to partner with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) to provide the following: housing provider educational campaigns; choices related to Housing Choice Vouchers; accessible, culturally-relevant resident education campaigns around Housing Rights and how to access housing support; support for conflict resolution between tenants and providers; and permanent, affordable housing to address homelessness.
 1. Dalia Aragon noted that whether or not there's education regarding the Housing Choice Vouchers, the waitlist is very long, and communicating with CHA sometimes is very complicated. Other members noted that greater language/verbiage is needed to support the end-users (residents) of this program, given the vast bureaucracy residents are often forced to navigate.
 2. Dalia Aragon also more broadly noted that this plan is meant to service those who are confused about what exactly this document aims to do. She noted that this plan caters more toward the city and planning agencies, versus the needs of residents and people living in the city, who she noted don't understand the language of this document.
 - a. pillar members noted that presently there is tension between having greater detail for the city to execute the plan versus the need to keep objectives intentionally vague for the city in order to determine specifics later. She assured members that as the process moves forward, the language will become more resident-facing and accessible.
- iii. The pillar next discussed Objective 3.4: to ensure housing is accessible or adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities.
 1. Patricia Fron noted that the group Access Living, a disability advocacy group, brought up the accessibility shortcomings of the city's housing. They brought up the need for greater inclusion in various elements of the city's building codes. Other pillar members noted they will review this and work to implement it.
- iv. The pillar next discussed Objective 4.1: "to increase access to healthy food and health care in Black and Latino community areas."
 1. Two pillar members suggested changing the language from "Black and Latino" to "all communities," with one pillar member noting that disparities, while greater in Black and Latino communities, exclude disparities also faced by Native American/Indigenous and Asian-American communities. Two other pillar members agreed that the

- verbiage should be expanded; however, the communities should specifically be called out by name to acknowledge the systemic and historical oppressions they have faced.
- v. The pillar next discussed Objective 4.2: “to support existing and grow new locally-owned neighborhood businesses.” Minimal discussion followed.
 - vi. The pillar next discussed Objective 4.3: “to create a welcoming environment to foster a stronger sense of belonging in all 77 community areas, esp. for youth & older residents.”
 1. pillar members clarified that there are youth councils in some wards, but universalizing this to have youth councils in every ward potentially linked to their respective ward. They then noted that instead of linking respective youth councils to their wards, the pillar should link youth councils to volunteer-based causes.
 - vii. The pillar next discussed Objective 4.4: “to strengthen community-based organizations in all 77 community areas.” No discussion followed.
 - viii. The pillar next discussed Objective 5.1: “to update the City’s rules and regulations to support increased development.”
 1. pillar member Jerome Wade emphasized the importance of ensuring that the regulations and rules are not overly complex – that they streamline processes without discouraging or hindering development.
 2. pillar member Jackie Paige noted that this topic is tricky; a balance is important between regulations to enable smaller business-owners to protect themselves from the system’s big players, while at the same time, enabling sufficient flexibility to ensure that small businesses have the opportunity to thrive without excessive regulation.
 - ix. The pillar next discussed Objective 5.2: “to focus future growth and density in and around transit hubs, key commercial corridors, and anchors.”
 1. pillar member Victoria Moreno requested clarification on whether transit hubs, commercial corridors, and anchors constituted 3 different things. Another pillar member clarified that these are different types of hubs.
 2. pillar member Michelle Meritt requested clarification on why transit-oriented development is being prioritized when there are communities in transit deserts that are lacking in growth and density. Another pillar member clarified that the intention was to provide an emphasis in the City budget for transit-oriented development given the problems faced in accessing it. She stated that the intent was not to exclude other areas. Michelle Meritt again reaffirmed her point and noted the South Side as an example, where greater accessibility, growth, and greater density was needed.
 - x. The pillar next discussed Objective 5.3: “to prioritize redevelopment of vacant land and buildings.”
 1. pillar member Jackie Paige noted that residents’ complaints about building violations often go disregarded. She said “we can write policies all day long - if they’re not being enforced, what good is it?” She affirmed the importance of enforcing policies to protect residents and ensure complaints are actionable and accountable.
 - xi. The pillar next discussed Objective 5.4: “to strengthen and anchor neighborhood developers – especially small or medium-sized ones that are led by Black, Latino, Native American, Asian, and Immigrant owners.”

1. pillar members noted the importance of distinguishing between housing providers that live in and service local neighborhoods vs. out-of-state real estate investment trusts or corporate speculators. He expressed that the language should center neighborhood developers.
- xii. The pillar next discussed Objective 5.4: “to enhance public spaces, schools, parks, services, and public infrastructure in underserved communities.”
 1. The pillar noted the distinction between outlining policy objectives for public safety – these will fall under the purview of a different pillar.

RESOURCES

WE WILL CHICAGO ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

[Link to future in-person and virtual community engagement events](#)

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

[We Will Chicago Housing and Neighborhood Pillar Overview](#)

THE CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY

[Chicago Housing Authority overview and brief history](#)

CHICAGO HOUSING OVERVIEW

[A report from the Institute of Housing Studies at DePaul University](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Pillar members will provide further written feedback [deadline not provided], and the pillar members will compile and distribute final copies of the updated language in each Goal and Objective. The pillar document will compile all current goals and policies.
- The research teams will then work on refining the policies based on feedback from the Housing + Neighborhoods pillar members and the city.
- When the Housing + Neighborhoods pillar members reconvene on June 9th, their final meeting, they will review all the policies once again and the Draft Framework Plan. They will talk through next steps and clarify questions.
- The entirety of We Will Chicago's pillar teams will have their final meeting as a collaborative meeting planned in-person for Tuesday, June 28th in the evening.