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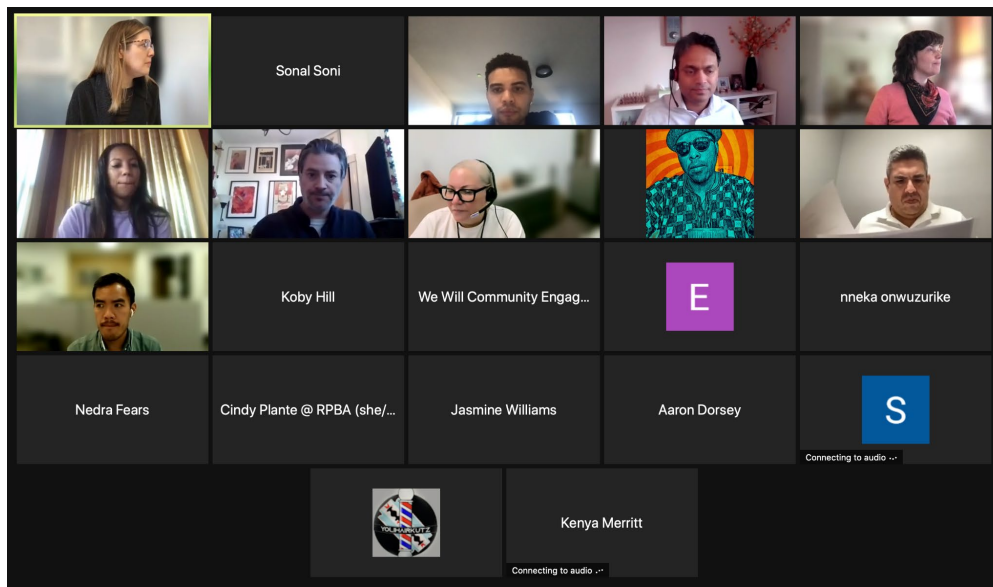
Economic Development Meeting #7

November 30, 2021, 2:00 PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Sonal Soni

ATTENDEES

- Salvador Cerna Mendoza
 - Amalia NietoGomez
 - Ranadip Bose
 - G. Sequane Lawrence
 - Nneke Onwuzurike
 - Koby Hill
 - Lynnette McRae
 - Jo de Presser
- Kenya Merritt
 - Angela Dugan
 - Adam Glueckert
 - Nedra Fears
 - Vanessa Stokes
 - Enneréssa (Reesie) Davis
 - Tony Manno
 - Katrina Balog
- Aaron Dorsey
 - Ally Brisbin
 - Cindy Plante
 - Gladys Montemayor
 - Jasmine Williams
 - Joshua Son
 - Kindy Kruller
 - Skyler Larrimore



MEETING GOAL

The goal of this meeting is to refine the pillar’s objectives based on feedback from the Advisory Committee report and findings from the artist-organizer team.

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

This meeting highlighted the importance of building on pre-existing community efforts to increase economic opportunities. Getting to know community residents through engagement activities and conversation helps build trust between the city and community while developing an understanding of what resources these communities lack and who is impacted the most. Knowing what organizations and activists are currently doing in disadvantaged communities also facilitates the City’s attempts at collaboration.

2

The Advisory Committee report emphasizes pillar collaboration and communication. While We Will Chicago’s seven pillars focus on different topics, there are areas of overlap. Engaging and collaborating with other pillars could deepen the pillar teams’ understanding of best practices for the upcoming policy frameworks.

3

Participants discussed how to describe the people they want to help. Attendees also agreed that the people most affected by lack of resources should be specifically outlined, as these are the pillar’s target demographic.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“One of the things I did early on when I started working [at ESDC] is the creation of a Pilsen consortium [which] is made up of outreach and engagement specialists that work for nonprofit organizations throughout the community. These are people who are hands-on, who do advocacy for organizations, who bring resources to the community.”

Salvador Cerna Mendoza | Economic Strategies Development Corporation (ESDC), Community Outreach Director

“In our existing objectives we use the term ‘Black and brown business owners ...’ Policies in the past [have] negatively impacted many of these communities over generations. As part of our commitment to equity [and] the historical reckoning framework we have of really naming these communities as part of our policies, I think there’s a question of how expansive should [the terminology] get?”

Katrina Balog | Muse Community + Design, Director

“In a nutshell, we wanted to make sure we had a holistic viewpoint of our neighborhoods, so that’s why we partner not only with business people ... We already know there are people and organizations doing the work in these areas. We didn’t want to come and infiltrate ... Let’s partner with the people already doing much needed work in these areas and build upon that.”

Enneréssa (Reesie) Davis | Praize Productions Inc., Executive Artistic Director and Founder

*“Some properties have been vacant, and are owned by people not in the neighborhood. They sit on the property, and what **could** [in writing, emphasis own] be affordable, isn’t available because they’ve priced it too high or want to wait until someone buys the property as a whole, rather than rent the space.”*

Amalia NietoGomez | Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE), Executive Director

“We want people to be a part of the decision making. But before you get to the decision making you want to be part of the solution itself... that’s the whole process of engagement.”

Ranadip Bose | SB Friedman Development Advisors, Senior Vice President

NOTES

Introduction/Consent

- After Zoom participants gave consent to be recorded, the pillar’s engagement presentations kicked off the meeting.
- The pillar’s community partners, the Economic Strategies Development Corporation (ESDC) and Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE), outlined the community feedback they received thus far. Moving forward, from December 2021 to February 2022, these partners will host two community engagement meetings with their constituents.
- Salvador Mendoza, the Community Outreach Director at ESDC, outlines his Pilsen Consortium initiative. The group consists of approximately 15 community organizations and five local businesses. Their goal is to engage in community-wide conversations about economic concerns to inform the pillar’s policy development. According to Mendoza, ESDC is planning an upcoming community engagement event including members of the Pilsen Consortium to find out how the pillar can best support local economic development.
- ASE is hosting an event on Thursday, Dec. 9, in collaboration with the Southeast Environmental Task Force. The event provides community members with questions regarding economic development and environmental justice issues. These responses will also serve as feedback to inform the pillar’s policy framework.

Advisory Committee Report—Kenya Merritt

- After the last pillar meeting, the research and facilitation team refined the group-defined objectives, which were presented to the We Will Advisory Committee for feedback. This report outlines the Advisory Committee feedback and serves as a guide to further refine the pillar’s objectives.
- Advisory Committee feedback includes specifying the communities that face the most economic burdens, for example, by studying demographics for business owners such as “immigrant-owned,” “woman-owned,” “Black-owned,” etc. Refining who needs the most economic support narrows the pillar’s focus on their target audience.
- Another point of feedback includes setting a pillar objective regarding public incentives for private investments.
- The next point of feedback includes reframing the workforce objectives language from “employer-driven” to something more neutral that takes the entire ecosystem into consideration and where employees are included and centered.
- The last point of feedback notes that the workforce objectives may overlap with other pillars.

Advisory Report: Cross-Cutting and General Feedback

- This portion of the report is not pillar-specific; instead, it includes overarching feedback on the We Will Chicago process thus far.
- General feedback includes: ensuring learning materials are available for people with disabilities and diverse learning needs, and increased language capacity (offering translation and interpretation services).
- The Advisory Committee proposes a question: “How can we change the community engagement process to ensure greater neighborhood participation and representation?”
- General feedback on budgeting includes a budget evaluation in the community engagement process, consideration of the [Build Back Better Framework’s](#) funding, and how the city prioritizes that funding.
- According to the Advisory Committee’s feedback, “the city has been unsuccessful in addressing crises through pouring money into nonprofits who do the direct services to respond to crises” and it asks “As we receive [American Rescue Plan] funds from the federal government, how can we get it right and create a framework/model for the future?”
- General feedback also includes private sector responsibilities. According to the report, “cities want companies to be good corporate citizens (and) this message has been diluted partially as a result of globalization.” The We Will Chicago plan will communicate the city’s ideals to the private sector. A question for private sector responsibilities: How do we engage and leverage government tools?
- Miscellaneous feedback on the report includes addressing megadevelopments in the We Will Chicago plan. Megadevelopments are large-scale projects spanning from residential living to retail spaces.

Artist-Organizer Report—Enneréssa "Reesie" Davis and Vanessa Stokes

- Davis and Stokes, co-chairs of the pillar’s artist-organizer team, focus on areas including Austin, Humboldt Park and Hermosa. The team connects and collaborates with local businesses, organizations, community leaders and residents in order to gain knowledge about the neighborhood’s culture and needs to develop economic and commerce strategies.
- The team’s objectives/goals:
 - Short-term: Create “neighborhood networks” with artists, organizations and businesses in the area to ensure community partnership and collaboration.
 - Mid-term: Schedule quarterly meetings with neighborhood networks to find key areas of need and support to develop action plans for specific areas.
 - Long-term: Host collective events and activities within neighborhoods to build community trust, share resources, gain exposure and bring in outside revenue to promote economic development.
- The artist organizer team emphasized how important collecting data is. Assessing what resources and efforts are already available allows We Will members to support pre-existing initiatives and implement new ones without imposing on the efforts of community members. The team conducted research by analyzing “Quality of Life Plans,” which reveal important demographic information and statistics on community residents. The team also spoke with

community members to find out what people need. Lastly, the team conducted one-on-one interviews with residents to further understand what exactly residents endure.

- The team created five key themes in the community-building process: historical reckoning/trust building, centering/embedding equity, community engagement, accountability and interagency/cross-collaboration.
- Engagement activities and events so far have taken place both in-person and online, many of which were in collaboration with other local organizations.

Breakout Rooms and Round Robin Reviews

- Zoom participants split into various breakout rooms to help refine the pillar's pre-existing objectives, using the Advisory Committee's feedback report. The objectives are associated with various guiding questions. Each guiding question has up to five related objectives.
- Objectives should be concise, ideally 10 words or less. Objectives should also avoid technical jargon, according to the pillar's public survey results. To keep the objectives simple, compound sentences should be avoided; instead, the objective should clearly outline its focus. Lastly, the objectives should relate directly to the guiding questions.
- Breakout Group #1:
 - Guiding question #1: How can we build and sustain generational wealth and shared prosperity in Black and brown communities?
 - Increase access to wealth or increase opportunities to grow generational wealth
 - Proposed objectives:
 - Increase access to capital and financial services for Black and brown business and residents.
 - Make financial literacy education resources accessible to all Chicagoans.
 - Facilitate cooperative ownership for businesses, land, and housing particularly in Black and brown neighborhoods.
 - Question #2: How can we nurture women-owned, Black- and brown-owned, and local businesses throughout Chicago?
 - Proposed objectives:
 - Prioritize resources and investments in small businesses and entrepreneurship programs in South and West Side neighborhoods.
 - Increase the availability of quality, affordable real estate in commercial/industrial corridors.
 - Promote and extend M/WBE procurement (beyond City and County) to Chicago institutions and private sector enterprises. Increase

accessibility for the M/WBE procurement process, from start to finish.

- The M/WBE procurement refers to Chicago's Minority and Women-owned Business [program](#). This program certifies minority and women business enterprises (M/WBE) and ensures that Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action criteria are met.
- Brainstormed objectives:
 - Decrease the number of vacant properties in business corridors.
 - Increase the number of businesses receiving start-up funds.
 - Consolidate retail/commercial sites at key locations In South and West Sides.
 - Prioritize and codify funding for minority/BIPOC communities.
- Breakout Group #2
 - Question #1: How should we strategically invest in equitable and inclusive workforce development in economic sectors for the 21st century?
 - Proposed Objectives:
 - Align workforce pipeline with educational providers.
 - Promote career pathways to thriving-wage jobs of the future that are located in Black and brown communities.
 - Build an employer-driven workforce ecosystem centered around local economic clusters of the future, such as advanced manufacturing, green construction, energy, transportation, etc.
 - Identify and remove barriers to job participation including misalignment of where the jobs are versus where the workers live, and availability of high-quality child and elder care.
 - Broaden access to well-paying jobs for non-traditional workers.
 - Brainstormed objectives
 - Engage with and incentivize employers to hire local, diverse candidates.
 - Improve the employer-driven workforce ecosystem.
 - Enhance job quality including pay, benefits, and job flexibility.

- Improve job access and career advancement for South and West Side residents.
- Align Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges of Chicago with future jobs and encourage career pathways in jobs that don't require a college degree.
- Provide education workers with stable, high-growth opportunities.
- Breakout Group #3
 - Question #1: How can we promote equitable public, private and philanthropic investment in historically marginalized neighborhoods without displacement?
 - Proposed Objectives:
 - Establish anti-displacement programs across the City.
 - Expand the voice of local residents and businesses in shaping investment in their neighborhoods.
 - Facilitate the creation of vibrant housing, commercial and industrial corridors in historically marginalized neighborhoods.
 - Incentivize financial institutions and the development community to invest in Black and brown communities.
 - Brainstormed Objectives:
 - Provide equitable financial services across Chicago.
 - Create vibrant housing, commercial and industrial corridors in communities that do not have these types of revitalization areas.
 - Generate a positive narrative association for areas that are developing in Chicago.

Q&A/Closeout

- This is the last pillar meeting of the year. In January, the next meeting will commence Phase 3: setting policy frameworks and assessing performance.
- During this stage, pillar members will build off their refined objectives, discuss best practices, assess data and revisit the Health and Racial Equity Impact Assessment (HREIA) and incorporate its framework. HREIA is a process that assesses health impacts that could result from a proposed plan, policy or project, in order to ensure racial equity.

RESOURCES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PILLAR EVENTS 2021

[This video contains photo and video documentation of the events the We Will Chicago Economic Development Pillar completed over the course of 2021.](#)

ALLIANCE OF THE SOUTHEAST (ASE)

[ASE is a multicultural, interfaith coalition of churches, schools, businesses, and community organizations, all working together to address the challenges facing the neighborhoods of Southeast Chicago.](#)

ECONOMIC STRATEGIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (ESDC)

[A Pilsen-based development corporation that supports small and micro businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs through no-cost technical assistance, training, and resources provided by city and federal programs.](#)

SOUTHEAST ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE (SETF)

[SETF is an environmental nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the southeast side and south suburbs of Chicago by promoting environmental education, pollution prevention, and sustainable development.](#)

MBE/WBE PROCUREMENT PROGRAM

[A city program that certifies and maintains a directory of minority- and women-owned business enterprises.](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Before the next meeting, pillar members will work on objectives and build off conversations from previous meetings to identify best practices and most utilized data.
- Pillar members will also identify assets and innovative policy development to help outline framework policies and performance metrics.