

This meeting summary was produced by City Bureau Documenters, in accordance with our editorial independence policy, with financial support from the city of Chicago. If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email City Bureau at [documenters@citybureau.org](mailto:documenters@citybureau.org) with "Correction Request" in the subject line.

## Transportation + Infrastructure Meeting #7

December 1, 2021, 6:00PM | 2 hours

*Documented by: Stephen Yoshida*

---

### ATTENDEES

- Lilliane Webb (facilitator)
- Tsehaye Geralyn Hebert
- Cindy Fish
- LaTanya Lane
- Melvin Thompson
- Jose Estrada
- Jordan Evangelista
- Billy Davis
- Elizabeth Scott
- Katherine Field McCarter
- Jamie Osbourne
- Billy Davis
- Alexandra Dumitriu
- Jamie Simone
- Yaritza Guillen
- Tim Gustafson
- Laurie Dittman
- Jose Estrada
- Leah Mooney
- Veronica Cruz
- Ben Cosgrove
- William Garcia
- Bill Higgins
- Cindy Fish
- Jamie Osborne



The image shows a Zoom meeting grid with the following participants and elements:

- Top Row:**
  - Zoom user (video off)
  - Stephen Yoshida (City Bureau) (video off)
  - Tsehaye Hebert (video off)
  - Cindy Fish (she/her) (video on)
  - Katherine Field McCarter (video on)
- Second Row:**
  - Leah Mooney (video on)
  - Jamie Osborne (DRD) (video on)
  - Billy Davis, BCDP (video on)
  - Veronica Cruz (video on)
  - Lilliane W... Facilitator (she/her) (video on)
- Third Row:**
  - LaTanya Lane (video off)
  - Ben Cosgrove (video off)
  - Alex Dumitriu (video on)
  - William Garcia (video off)
  - Jose Estrada (video off)
- Bottom Row:**
  - Jamie Simone (video off)
  - CDOT logo (video off)

## MEETING GOAL

*Hear presentations about artist & community partner engagements and the Pillar co-chairs' report-out from the Advisory Council; then apply new information from the presentations when revising the Pillar's Guiding Questions and Objectives in small groups.*

## 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

Artist-Organizers Yaritza Guillen and Jordan Evangelista gave a presentation about their community-based research. They expanded on candid observations about their struggles with enrollment. They described the hurdles they faced engaging with people on behalf of the City due to the legacies of past plans, research fatigue and historical exclusion of marginalized communities, as well as their struggles overcoming a general lack of participants' familiarity with the We Will Chicago Plan. They ended with their findings for meaningful resident engagement and a vision for deeper, long-term collaboration with communities.

2

Billy Davis, a community partner from the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership (BCDP), reported on hosting an engagement event to discuss an electric vehicle (EV) charging desert on the South and West Sides with 60 people, most of whom Davis described as "industry people." He asked for help with reaching people in his target neighborhoods in the Bronzeville area—somewhat underscoring Evangelista and Guillen's comments about the plan's need for better community engagement.

3

The Co-Chairs were not present during presentations, so they could not present the general and "cross-cutting" feedback from the Advisory Committee. Since the presentations did not run long, the breakout and round robin working sessions were able to run 15 minutes longer.

## CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

*“[One] of the challenges we faced in engaging with our communities was research fatigue. There’s been a lot of research done on these communities and they’re tired of it, especially since they’re not seeing results. There’s distrust of engagement efforts. We heard the City described, not as a partner, but more as distant, uncoordinated, and unresponsive.”*

**Jordan Evangelista** | Artist-Organizer

*“We really think all Chicago residents need to be aware of We Will Chicago and that is far from the truth right now. Even towards the end in our target neighborhoods where we’ve been pretty present, there’s a lot of people who didn’t know about We Will Chicago.”*

**Jordan Evangelista** | Artist-Organizer

*“Bicycle resources are needed the most where unemployment is the highest, where violence is the highest, where mobility is constricted, and those neighborhoods are all Black and Brown on the South and West Side.”*

**Oboi Olatunji Reed** | Equicity, From Honey Pot Performance Engagement’s StoryMap

## NOTES

**Preliminary Notes**

- Transportation & Infrastructure Co-Chairs:
  - Jamie Simone, Chicago Department of Transportation
- Melvin Thompson –The Endeleo Institute, Inc.
- Artist-Organizers:
  - Jordan Evangelista
  - Kimeco Roberson
  - Yaritza Gullien
- Findings so far:
  - Multi-modal transportation resources should be available citywide for people of all ability levels, providing options and alternatives that conveniently connect homes with population centers, jobs centers, shopping centers and other important destinations.

- Diversity goals should recognize and accommodate the different needs of individuals with different mobility levels and ages, as well as the geographies of under-served neighborhoods.
- Sustainable transportation modes, especially mass transit systems, should be incentivized to ensure they continue to accommodate local needs.
- Technology should help people to access the city's transportation networks in real-time, including navigation aids and payments that may be required for users.
- Maintenance should ensure all transit modes are safe, providing accountability and nurturing public-private partnerships to monitor current conditions and plans for the future.
- Broadband access should be available in all neighborhoods, regardless of local income levels.

### **Artist presentation - Jordan Evangelista, Yaritza Guillen**

- Evangelista provided context for Honey Pot Performance's community engagement efforts, taking place between June and November 2020. Artist-organizers have hosted 11 unique events with different partners: some multi-day, some closed workshops with existing groups, some tabling, some collaboration to make new events.
- Engagement events took place in three west side neighborhoods with histories of transportation activism and to narrow scope: Little Village, North Lawndale, West Garfield Park
- The team wanted to introduce people to We Will Chicago, plant seeds for future engagement and learn community members' initial thoughts about transportation infrastructure
- Guillen spoke to creating an artist response from community engagement input. Guillen said they found people were curious to learn urban planning terminology. Artist-organizers got advice from Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) including resources for the public. Artist-organizers decided to create a guidebook to help people learn about transportation infrastructure terminology. The guidebook evolved as they gathered narratives through storytelling resulting in a zine and StoryMap including terminology and stories.
- Guillen then summarized learnings from their conversations through engagement efforts:
  - Five main concerns within transportation identified through research by We Will Chicago before engagement started: Reliability, Connectivity & Speed of Transit; Maintenance, Lighting, Greenery and Art; Redistributing the Balance of Public Space; High-speed, Low-cost Internet; and Meaningful Resident Influence on Decisions and Outcomes.
  - Guillen shares quotations from their community members that reflect on the importance of transportation infrastructure in communities with historical disinvestment and the importance of accountability and the interconnectedness of issues like transportation access with issues like food access.
    - For example, Luis Rafael, organizer from Englewood, asked about the Peace Book Ordinance by Good Kids Mad City, which outlines how resources could be distributed to improve infrastructure, like transportation. Rafael asked

what is happening with resources that have already been created that get at the problems being discussed in this planning process.

- Challenges in engagement: Research fatigue, distrust, historic exclusion of marginalized communities, and limitations of virtual engagement
  - Artist-organizers are running up against apathy and mistrust, which are the historic legacy of planning that We Will Chicago has been posing itself against. People are tired of being studied so intensely without seeing results. Many people have not come to see the City of Chicago as a partner and see it more as distant. The historic exclusion of marginalized people is leading those groups to become less engaged.
  - Artist-Organizers are finding virtual communication doesn't exactly meet a new audience, it only engages people that would be looking for online discussions about city planning.
- Evangelista poses a question the artist-organizers asked themselves: "By 2023, what is needed to ensure meaning resident influence on decisions and outcomes in WWC?" Answers include:
  - People need to be more aware of it going forward — seemingly no one the artist-organizer team talked to knew about We Will Chicago
  - Need to people where they are at, make direct invitations, engage with youth
  - Long term collaborators want to see We Will Chicago's process of community engagement and input as an on-going process
  - Fund new projects. Let residents lead: residents know what they need, they have "shovel ready" projects to improve their neighborhoods, the city just needs to commit to meaningful involvement. Residents have project ideas if the city were just better at asking them about them.
  - People are engaged when they see historical promises are being kept. People remember the past promises and projects that were never followed through on. They remember the divisive infrastructure that oppressed and separated their communities and want to see change. Accountability - Update residents and keep them involved.
- The artist team shared a draft of their engagement learnings.

### **Community Partners - Billy Davis, Bronzeville Community Development Partnership (BCDP)**

- November 15th virtual event included approximately 60 attendees. They focused on an area of particular concern that is not well known: electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and specifically multifamily charging. They also discussed equity and environmental justice issues. Davis noted attendees were mostly "industry folks" or people familiar with EV charging instead of folks who are not.
- South and West side "charging deserts" where there are no charging stations for electric vehicles

- A panel discussion featured EV users talking about how they have to plan their day around charging
- Need help with outreach to a wider audience for the next event on January 27th is a traditional community forum and features community partners to help reach neighborhood residents. The forum is organized around two to three guiding principles.

#### **Community Partner - Jose Estrada, Arquitectos**

- Haven't had an event yet. The first one is next Wednesday, Dec. 8 and another Feb. 3 following the "Meeting in a Box" format. The event will be a closed-door to gather perspectives of architects, developers and urban planning people—12 members, Chicago residents, with a design background, familiar with transportation & infrastructure design and planning.

#### **Breakouts and Round Robin Working Sessions**

##### **Cindy Fish introduces Phase 3 - Advisory Committee Comments**

- References Advisory Committee's feedback in the group's working documents and introduces tactics for revising language of Objectives and Guiding Questions.

#### **RESOURCES**

##### **Mobility & Care: Hometown Voices**

[Story map created by Yaritza Guillen, Jordan Evangelista](#)

##### **We Will Chicago Events Calendar**

[Upcoming public engagement events](#)

##### **January Justice at Trinity United Church of Christ**

**This event series will feature at least one We Will Chicago engagement event**

#### **NEXT STEPS**

- Research team will be working on incorporating the cross-cutting and general comments from the Advisory Committee into the pillar's proposed objectives