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Public Health and Safety Meeting #5

October 12, 2021, 6:00 PM | 2 hours

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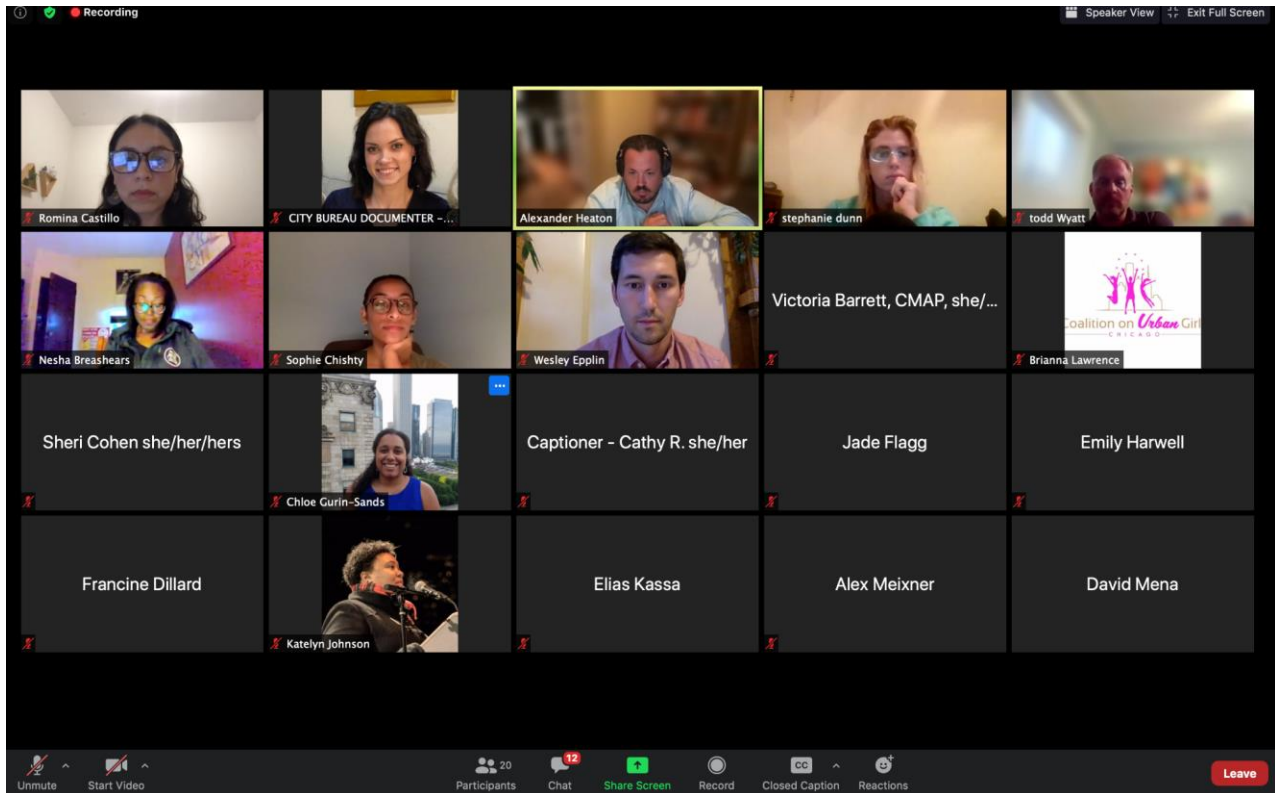
MEETING MATERIALS

[Agenda <Link to Agenda>](#)

[Presentation <Link to presentation>](#)

ATTENDEES

- Romina Castillo
- Alexander Heaton
- Stephanie Dunn
- Todd Wyatt
- Emily Harwell
- Katelyn Johnson
- Kate McMahon
- Nesha Breashears
- Sophie Chishty
- Wesley Epplin
- Cathy R.
- Jade Flagg
- Elias Kassa
- Marlita White
- Victoria Barrett
- Brianna Lawrence
- Sheri Cohen
- Chloe Gurin-Sands
- Francine Dillard
- Alex Meixner
- David Mena



MEETING GOAL

Split into two working groups to provide a space for open discussion each focused specifically on one of the sides of this pillar, Public Health and Public Safety.

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

There has been an uneven discussion on both aspects of this pillar (public health vs public safety), but after receiving feedback, the pillar leaders have pivoted to balance discussion through two separate working groups for each topic and a new co-chair focused on public safety.

2

There's a lot of support for divesting in police departments in overly policed areas and re-directing those funds into community-led organizations as a way to prevent violence and address the root cause.

3

Funding of mental health services, especially on the South and West sides, is a recurring answer to how the group can address many of the intertwined issues that this pillar covers.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“A lot of the people that we work with have had traumatic experiences, both with the police and with inter-community violence, and there's a lot of wrestling between the need to feel safe and really reimagining what safe means, and also recognizing that policing and incarceration has done nothing to further protect their safety.”

Katelyn Johnson | BlackRoots Alliance, Executive Director

“We agreed that addressing persistent poverty and a lack of freedom of movement really will address a lot of our concerns with public safety, and the importance of focusing on all levers rather than just law enforcement.”

Alexander Heaton | Office of the Mayor, Policy Advisor for Public Safety

“When I think about people who are often invited to the table—especially relative to community-led organizations—if you do not have an annual report or something like that then often you're not looked at as being credible, although the community you serve look at you that way. If there can be some partnership or collaboration where we could connect organizations that don't have those resources to research institutions so that they can be evaluated for their effectiveness and also be included or as thought leaders at tables.”

Brianna Lawrence | Coalition on Urban Girls Chicago, President

NOTES

Kickoff and Introductions

- The timeline for the We Will Chicago (WWC) process may be extended for all pillars. Wesley Epplin reviews the benefits of extending timeline including more fully incorporating feedback from community engagement opportunities, “discussing “cross-pillar topics” and “provid[ing] more time for reflection and thorough discussion around historical reckoning and the use of HREIA.”

- Epplin provides an engagement update. The feedback from engagement events is being synthesized by pillar and will be incorporated into pillar conversations in the future. Epplin asks attendees to share a survey on the WWC website, designed for community input on public health and safety widely.

Overview

- Since public health and public safety are two large topics, Romina Castillo explains, and conversations have “geared towards public health,” a new co-chair, Alexander Heaton, who has more expertise on public safety joins the pillar. Pillar members will divide into two “working groups” dedicated to each of the topics.
 - Members have been randomly assigned and given the choice to switch groups
- “Can you broadly...describe the difference between public health and public safety so I can make sure that I'm actually going to the group that I want to go to even though they're both kind of together and separate at the same time” - Brianna Lawrence
- Wesley Epplin answers Lawrence’s question: “I'm going off the cuff here—I think that public safety pertains to people feeling safe out, being safe, out and about in their community and at home, but especially in the public space and things related to that. Things such as policing, things such as the built environment as it pertains to safety, public health can include that, but I think the distinction we're making here is topics that aren't that relate to public health that we've talked about before. So, things that support people having a healthy lifestyle, things that support people having the resources they need to be healthy. I think the interesting thing is how they relate to each other—people feeling safe relates to people's ability to be active, for example. So that's an obvious area where we need to talk about how these topics relate to each other.”
- Alexander Heaton elaborates: “Public safety is ...more about some feeling of being safe from violence or from harm ..] public health is more based on your ability to live independently and or as independently as you can” –

Public Safety Breakout Session Discussion - What can we learn from the data and our own lived experiences?

- Katelyn Johnson points out the importance of thinking through unintended consequences.
- “Many of our participants and out across our network also identify as abolitionists, and while that isn't necessarily the perspective of everyone in our network, that is increasingly a perspective that people are landing on because you know they've lived in communities for decades upon decades and they're seeing that more policing and more incarceration is not doing anything to really affect the lives conditions or a day-to-day experiences,” said Katelyn Johnson
- “Even just thinking, ‘why was this topic not talked about as much as public health.’ When I think of public health, [...] it's different, it's how you feel. That's like much more nebulous and that's harder to place and that's harder to put your finger on, even for us to identify our own feelings, [...] you don't really identify your own feelings or emotions and a lot of ways, but you're affected by them—you'll notice your heart rate going up or your blood pressure goes up, there's a lot of other stress elements that come out in other ways. [...] Safety is also equated with gentrification in many ways, and that safety is almost like a privilege and with that thinking is going to come a lot of other unintended consequences,” said Stephanie Dunn.

- “I was doing my bachelor's in social work and interned at a violence prevention program. A lot of the workers there voiced their concerns about the policies and the procedure for combating violence and safety in the power of the people who don't look like the people in the community. So, I think you're spot on, [Marlita], and that was like one of the number one things that they complained about to me while I was working there,” said Jade Flagg.

Breakout session share outs

- Alex Heaton's Public Safety summary to the group : “We spoke about the need to make sure we're checking in with all of the groups. We agreed that addressing persistent poverty and a lack of freedom of movement really will address a lot of our concerns with public safety, and the importance of focusing on all levers rather than just law enforcement. We spoke about the importance of engaging the community and recognizing that certain communities will have certain expectations of what public safety will look like there and having a specific focus on violence prevention and cross sharing of skills and resources.”
- Wesley Epplin's Public Health summary to the group: “We talked about people adopting healthy habits, especially when they're young, and the barriers to that, including health literacy challenges as well as challenges that are more systemic, including not having the resources in your community, like access to quality air, access to healthy foods and equitable and high quality education—those types of issues. We talked about equitable opportunities for education and exercise to strengthen existing community organizations and resources. We also jumped back to the themes and challenges for public health and outlined a number of issues related to health care, especially access to shelter. And we talked a lot about resource mapping—there are obviously inequities in our resources but there are also a lot of resources, and making sure that people know what's available when they need a particular service.” Services discussed include MAPSCorps and 2-1-1.

Policy framework and objectives

- Epplin describes the progress of the WWC plan. Pillar members created guiding questions in previous meetings that will now inform pillar objectives. These objectives will eventually inform the overall policy framework for the plan.
- Epplin explains WWC pillars' work could guide city decision-making around “land use, transportation, public facilities, spending and other major areas” The policy framework n could accomplish things like establishing criteria and metrics based on equity and resiliency and creating standards for neighborhood and regional plans for City adoption.
- Epplin shares sample policy frameworks used in citywide plans to illustrate how their pillar work can be used in the future. Epplin then walks through the following city plans focused on equitable planning and compares them to WWC: New York[s ONENYC 2050], Memphis [3.0] and Edmonton [City Plan]
- Epplin then walks through examples of objectives that are “too broad,” “too focused,” and “just right” based on the pillar's guiding question: “How can we ensure equitable and affordable physical and behavioral healthcare services for all Chicagoans?”
 - The “just right” ex. is “Increase access to health navigators prepared to support insurance enrollment in communities with high uninsurance rates and low life expectancy”

Mentimeter Exercise

- Castillo sets up the exercise, building on Epplin and White's conversation, and names that ideas may be too broad or focused, but that they will work to refine objectives over the next meetings. Pillar members submit ideas through Mentimeter, which Castillo shares. Below are questions and some of pillar members' answers:
- Question #1: "How can we ensure equitable and affordable healthcare services for all Chicagoans?"
 - Increase funding to safety-net neighborhood hospitals/incentivize Chicago hospitals to localize service in historically underserved communities Support universal socialized health insurance coverage
 - Supporting community rooted organizations to host outreach efforts by healthcare services
 - Create a plan that covers people who have gaps on CountyCare and/or Medicaid
 - Advance trauma-informed policies and practices
 - Promote policy that advances prescription drug affordability
- Question #2: "How can we ensure equitable accessibility and safe freedom of movement with opportunities that promote optimal health & well being for all Chicagoans?"
 - Fixing infrastructure such as street lights, side walks, potholes
 - Ensure accessibility of all public transit (e.g. ensuring all stops have elevators, PACE program) and public areas (e.g. beaches)
 - Disarm the police
 - Reduce parking fees/remove meters
 - Reimagine abandoned buildings / city property as resource hubs and safe houses
- Question #3: "How can we reallocate City funds, space and resources away from the justice system toward community-led public safety initiatives?"
 - Fund mobile mental health and substance abuse services
 - Divest police departments in over policed areas, reinvest in community resources for mental health, education, public arts, safe consumption sites
 - Continue to support mental health professionals in the 9-1-1 department
 - Transfer responsibility of responding to mental health crisis from police department to mental health/social service professionals
- Question #4: "How can we allocate resources that address the root causes of health inequities to ensure equitable outcomes in all communities?"
 - Abolish tax increment financing in Chicago
 - Commit to data-driven policy and funding decisions
 - Funding should not be tied to property taxes
 - Further investment in homeless shelters, food pantries, education, public arts and parks
 - Advance safe, affordable, equitable housing policy
 - Look at drivers for the racial life expectancy gap

- Give families money directly (universal basic income)
- Connecting folks in need of food with restaurants to redistribute food that would otherwise be thrown out
 - Question #5: “How can we achieve environmental justice through equitable decision making from planners, developers and communities?”
 - Fund community accountability structures
 - Improve housing development policies to protect marginalized communities from environmental effects
 - Put pollution factories, waste sources, etc. in areas where humans do not reside
 - Have an ordinance that requires the city to consider cumulative impacts on pollution
 - Increased funding into public green spaces
 - Conduct health and race equity impact assessments and decision making related to environment
 - Include community members who these disparities have impacted the decision making table
- Question #6: “How can we institutionalize a racial justice approach in all decisions and all decision making for legislative change, with an emphasis on accountability from officials?”
 - Including marginalized voices in decision making and leadership roles
 - Sustain accountability structures
 - Require annual training on structural racism for Chicago's elected officials
 - Formalize health equity policy approach
 - Invest in initiatives and programs and empower members from the community.
 - Commit to building a pipeline for representation
 - Reparations
 - Castillo floats the idea of doing an “Alderman report card” for accountability, Active Transportation Alliance’s bus report card

RESOURCES

Public Health and Safety We Will Chicago survey

[Survey asking Chicagoans the guiding questions for this pillar.](#)

City of Austin, Texas reimagining public safety plan

[Example of a public safety plan.](#)

Safe/supervised consumption services

[Description of safe consumption services.](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Share survey, next week we will be splitting up into smaller groups for discussion