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Housing & Neighborhoods Meeting #4

September 23, 2021, 10:00AM | 2 hours

Documented by: Izzy Stroobandt

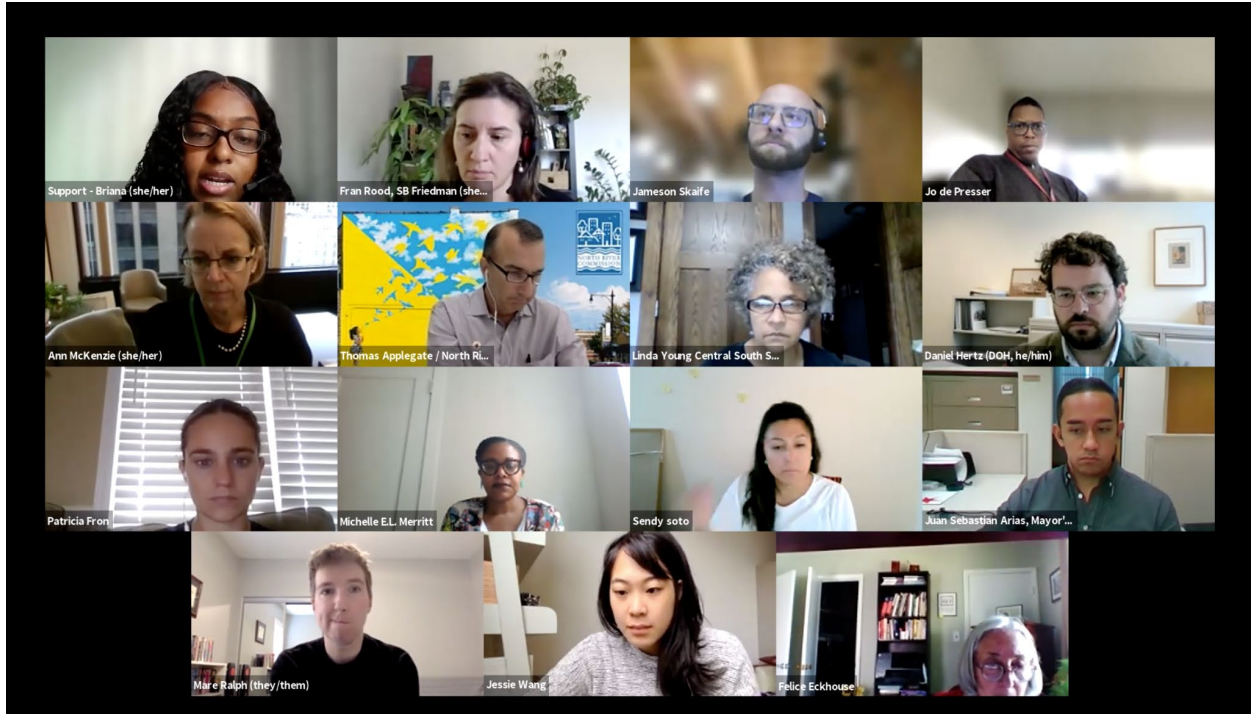
MEETING MATERIALS

[Agenda <Link to Agenda>](#)

[Presentation <Link to presentation>](#)

ATTENDEES

- Briana, host (She/her)
- Fran Rood, SB Friedman (she/her)
- Jameson Skaife
- Juan Sebastian Arias, Mayor's Office
- Mare Ralph (they/them)
- Victoria Ogunsanya
- Jo de Presser
- Ann McKenzie (she/her)
- Tomas Applegate, North River Commission
- Sendy Soto, DOH
- Jessie Wang
- Enrique Castillo
- Victoria Moreno
- Linda Young, Central South Shore Area Council
- Daniel Hertz, DOH (he/him)
- Patricia Fron
- Michelle E.L. Merritt
- Felice Eckhouse



(second screenshot taken 30 min into presentation)

MEETING GOAL

The primary goal of this meeting was to hear from an artist-organizer, come to a consensus on the pillar definition and guiding questions, review overarching and pillar-specific trends and reintroduce the Health and Racial Equity Impact Assessment (HREIA).

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

The artist-organizers for this pillar are struggling with community engagement. They've tried using social media, and are now asking participants to send out a survey to their organizations. Linda Young, seemingly a voice for the community members of Chicago (at least the South Side), says this disconnect is a result of a lack of trust; the community feels like "guinea pigs" that the city only cares about during data-gathering.

2

This group is highly focused on equity so that all the neighborhoods across Chicago can begin to appear more equitably resourced and less segregated. There were many comments asking for attention to be paid to the fact that neighborhoods in Chicago are at entirely different stages of investment and development, due to historical inequities.

3

Participants believe that the roadblocks that they will encounter throughout this process will be centered on engagement with the community. They are also concerned about ensuring their input makes it all the way to the actual planning process and policy creation.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

“Our communities are very territorial. We do not appreciate somebody from the outside coming in to say, ‘Hey, let’s do a piece article.’ You have to work through the existing organizations who have already established relationships with the people.”

Linda Young | Central South Shore Area Council, President

“One thing is hearing statements made about agreeing to community engagement, or being supportive of community participation, and another one is what was actually done to achieve that. Not only the number of meetings, but what was the outreach? What was the communication with the community and what was considered? Because also, it’s one thing to hear public voices in a public comment section of the meeting, but does that always translate into considering that in the decision-making process? That’s part of what transparency can look like.”

Victoria Moreno | United States Commission on Civil Rights, Analyst

“How—and are—we thinking about the total community that this all fits into? Are we creating a community that is accessible and affordable, and then considering transportation and all? Are we having the big picture of how our housing and our neighborhoods are being created, formed, and thought about and who are we, the users, who’s going to be living there?”

Felice Eckhouse | Elderspaces, President

“How do you measure what community engagement looks like? If you have three wards and you’re only having representation for one, I don’t know how you even put that word in your mouth. [...] We just need to do more to make sure that the community is truly engaged and involved in that decision-making.”

Linda Young | Central South Shore Area Council, President

NOTES

Kickoff and Introductions

- Briana starts with a reflective prompt, asking participants to share: “If there are any past planning processes that [they] have participated in focused on housing, neighborhoods and equity, or if there are any past plans that stood out to you and if so, why?”
 - “The Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing,” Patricia Forn said. “I participated in the planning process. The Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance led an advisory committee—similar to this...one thing that I think was unique about it that carries over to this plan...is providing grants to community-based organizations that can be used then to assist with removing barriers for individual community members to get involved with the plan.”
 - “[Urban Land Institute] Albany Park Affordable Housing study and plan valued both community and professional intelligence,” said Thomas Applegate of the North River Commission. Ann McKenzie also participated in this project.
 - “I participated in planning for the redevelopment of Lake Ridge homes,” said Michelle E.L. Merritt. “And it was a very robust planning process. What stood out to me was that groups were able to come together around the issue of preservation from different perspectives. The affordable housing community was able to engage around preservation of affordable housing and then there were other participants that were interested just around preservation of architecture and design on the North Side of Chicago.”

Overview

- Today’s meeting focuses on moving the research process forward, finalizing guiding questions collectively and talking through the Health Racial Equity Impact Assessment framework used in this process.

Overview Process

- Phase 1: Fall 2020: Pre-planning: *What should the plan address?* Twenty-eight conversations and workshops, 600+ people participating. The results are topics for each pillar.
- Phase 2: Fall 2021: Research: *What are the guiding questions that will lead to recommendations?* Two hundred eighty-five individuals and organizations selected, open application process, actively engaged in developing guiding questions. Anticipated results: Activities by artists, community partners and others will seek broader reactions to those questions.
- Phase 3: Winter 2022: Policy and action plan: *Do these recommendations address the past and present and will they move us forward?* How should engagement be designed?

Phase II Public Engagement Channels:

- Sept-Oct: Artist/organizer engagements
- Oct-Dec: Community partner engagement events, Virtual Forums: Website + Surveys
- Piloting Oct- Dec: Meeting in a box

Artist-Organizer Presentation: Michelle E.L. Merritt

- “We held our most recent outreach and engagement activity on September 11. It was a community peace circle that was held at the Bee Branch Library in Bronzeville,” Merritt said.
 - Merritt explains they’ve been doing outreach but challenged to engage participants and get people to show up.
 - They’ve been using social media and will continue to do so to promote.
- Merritt describes the small group that did attend the last activity naming the small size “allowed us to have some really good conversation.” Merritt also reflects on the benefit of hosting peace circles at libraries since they’re “neutral space.”
 - Jo de Presser also participated in the event saying: “The peace circle is always great to be a part of, because it opens you up, it eases you, it gives you a place to relax and to be open... Sharing thoughts about our community, it puts us in a positive mindset about the community and the neighborhoods.”
- Visual Artist Naima Thomas came to the peace circle and will create a piece of art reflecting the experience Briana adds.
- There is a virtual peace circle this evening at 6 p.m. and there will be another in-person peace circle in October. Merritt requests that a 10-question Google Doc survey be sent out by each participant to their respective agencies.
- Merritt says it’s been challenging to engage community organizations. She added, “Although our four communities are Bronzeville, Chinatown, Englewood and Pilsen, we’re open to going beyond those four communities.”

Guiding Questions / Pillar Definition Discussion

- Fran Rood states the objective of this discussion, to confirm up to five guiding question, three of which will be shared on the We Will Chicago.
- Re: Theme 1, Patricia Fron says, “We talk a lot about community decision-making power in the above pillar areas and then here it kind of shifts more to community engagement. I would really emphasize the decision-making power piece of it, and less emphasis on the engagement piece of it.”
- Linda Young emphasizes the importance of establishing standards for community engagement across communities: “In some of our communities, we have multiple wards and multiple aldermen. When we identify community engagement, one alderman cannot say, ‘yeah, we had community engagement,’ when he didn’t invite the constituents from the other [neighboring] wards.”
- Patricia Fron describes differences in constituents’ decision making powers across wards: “We have certain wards now that have zoning advisory councils, for example. These are informal bodies that don’t have to abide by the Open Meetings Act and they’re community members who have a vast amount of power and making decisions about their ward and they’re highly concentrated in predominantly white wards in the city. And then you look at other wards that have no decision-making power by community members. There’s not a baseline level of how community residents participate in development decisions that’s

uniform across the city and that is open/transparent. These groups should be abiding by the Open Meetings Act.”

Pillar Trends Overview

- **Redlining:** Between 1935 and 1940, the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) assigned grades to residential neighborhoods that reflected “mortgage security.” Residents of Zones C and D (see map below with HOLC Appraisal grade), mostly Black and brown residents, were subjected to racist lending practices that blocked opportunities to obtain mortgages and build wealth. Black families in Chicago lost between \$3 billion and \$4 billion in wealth because of predatory housing contracts during the 1950s and 1960s.
- **Segregation:** A segregated city is a direct outcome of historic redlining and racism. Chicago is among the top five most segregated cities in the US. (See map with Race, Dot Density).
- **Life expectancy:** Cross cutting indicator. Racism and multi-generational barriers to economic and social capital have produced an 8.8 year Black/white life expectancy gap in Chicago. In the city of Chicago there’s almost a 20-year gap between the neighborhoods with the highest and lowest life expectancy.
- Ongoing structural racism affects Chicagoans and their communities in all aspects of life—new building permits per capita, neighborhood hardship index, and neighborhood safety index.
- **Population change:** There has been a loss of Black and brown residents in long-established communities on the South and West sides. Strong growth in Asian population, but displacement occurring in the Argyle area.

Health and Racial Equity Index Assessment (HREIA)

- Defined as: “A set of guiding questions and a community engaged process to evaluate the potential effects of a plan, an objective, a policy or recommendation before it’s built or before it’s implemented. It incorporates elements of health impact assessment and racial equity impact assessment in order to understand impacts to communities and individuals,” Rood explained.
- “The development of the HREIA process in Chicago was done in partnership with a community accountability committee, a 10-member group of leaders from Chicago representing community based organizations, mostly on the West and South Sides with diverse topical expertise,” Rood explained.
- “If the guiding questions really have community level impacts on access to amenities, resources, schools, displacement and exposure to pollutants and, and hazardous materials...we’ll see individual and family level improvements and chronic disease outcomes like asthma, cancer, heart disease, developmental health, educational attainment, homelessness, mental health, and for the long term life expectancy,” she explained.

Pillar-specific Trends, Data

- **Housing cost burden:** Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by the cost burden due to lack of quality, affordable housing choices and reduced economic opportunity. Can lead to material hardship including food insecurity, difficulty paying bills, and foregoing needed medical care. Build on policies that increase the supply of affordable housing, preserve existing supply, and increase economic and wealth building opportunities in lower income areas.
- **Affordable housing unit supply:** Legally restricted affordable housing is generally contracted on the South and West Sides, including some areas that lack transit connectivity. Options are limited downtown, in parts of the North Side, and in many single-family neighborhoods in the Northwest and Southwest. Some areas of the city with transit connectivity such as the Far North Side and South Side have more legally-restricted affordable housing.
- **Community belonging:** Lack of long-term residents and high-quality amenities, perceptions of crime and other factors contribute to lack of community belonging. Majority Black neighborhoods are more likely to have lower rates of community belonging, negatively impacting psychological and social well-being. Majority Latinx neighborhoods on the Lower West Side have the highest sense of community belonging.

RESOURCES

NOAH Risk Analysis

[Learn more about Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing \(NOAH\) risk analysis and how the Preservation Lab approaches this work.](#)

IRPPP Releases Report on Black Population Loss in Chicago

[Read the summary of their findings.](#)

Who Leaves Cook County?

[Read the Metropolitan Planning Council's Report on out migration of Black Chicagoans by income, age, and other characteristics.](#)

Healthy Chicago 2025

[Review the full Healthy Chicago 2025 report from CDPH.](#)

NEXT STEPS

- Use Google Doc to share thoughts about pillar trends and data needs, and past plans that might be useful to look at in future discussions.