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Transportation and Infrastructure Meeting #5

October 13, 2021, 6:00PM | 2 hours

Documented by: Benjy Sachs

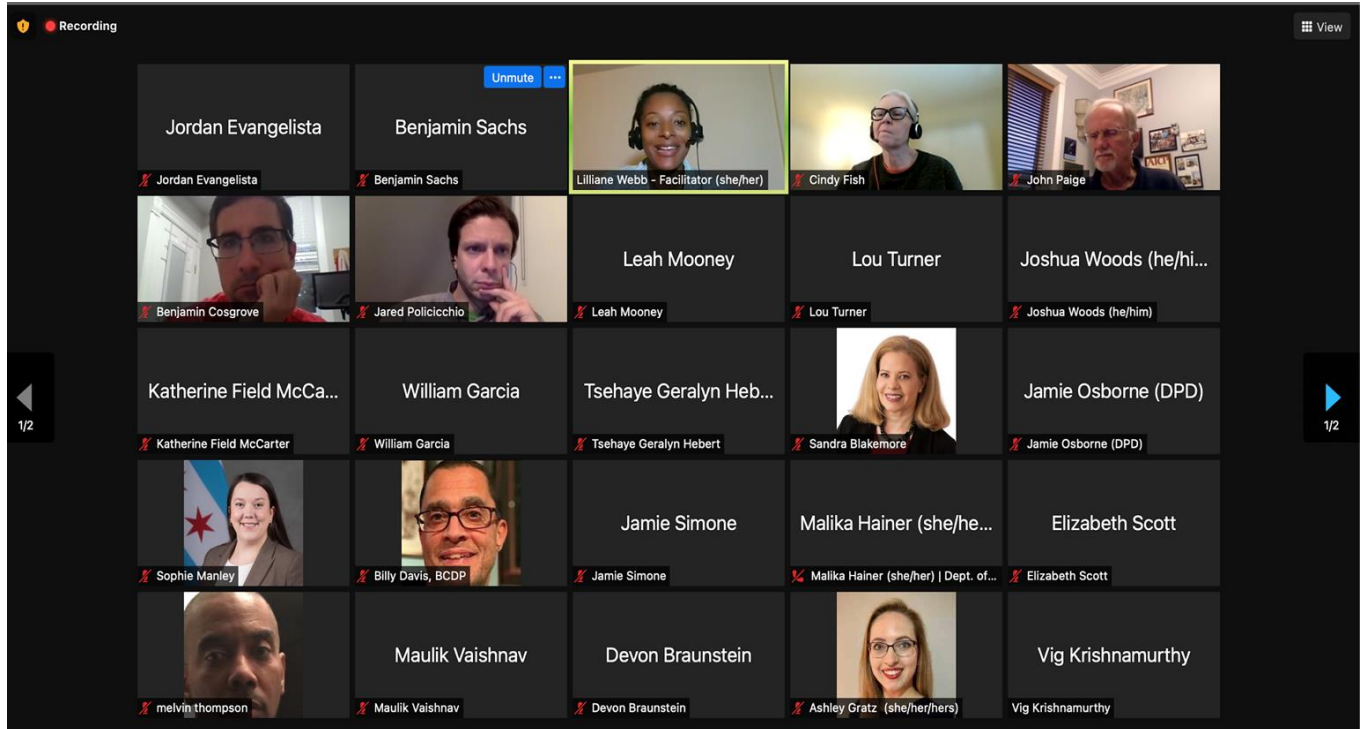
MEETING MATERIALS

[Agenda <Link to Agenda>](#)

[Presentation <Link to presentation>](#)

ATTENDEES

- Jordan Evangelista
- Lilliane Webb
- Cindy Fish
- John Paige
- Benjamin Cosgrove
- Jared Policicchio
- Katherine Field McCarter
- Shadan Tofighi
- LaTanya Lane
- Ashley Gratz
- Leah Mooney
- Lou Turner
- Joshua Woods
- William Garcia
- Tsehaye Geralyn Hebert
- Sandra Blakemore
- Jamie Osborne
- Pericles Georgopoulos
- Sophie Manley
- William Davis
- Jamie Simone
- Malika Hainer
- Elizabeth Scott
- Melvin Thompson
- Maulik Vaishnav
- Devon Braunstein
- Vig Krishnamurthy
- Jose Estrada



MEETING GOAL

Review the guiding questions and racial disparities data from the previous meetings and begin to brainstorm objectives and policy ideas to answer these questions and problems.

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 group reviewed data on the deep segregation in Chicago stemming from decades of official city and federal policy from last week's meeting and added their own anecdotes and analysis.

2

The group answered a series of short answer questions on Menti about how to equitably improve public transit in the city.

3

The group went over and briefly discussed the plan to extend the meeting schedule from 9 meetings to 14. Participants were asked to fill out a survey about this proposed extension.

CONVERSATION HIGHLIGHTS

"In the last city plan in the 1960s in Chicago, 'urban renewal' meant 'Negro removal.'"

Lou Turner | University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Clinical Assistant Professor in Urban and Regional Planning

"Mayor [Rahm] Emanuel's Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative added to [the] inequitable impact of industrial corridors. E.g., as the North Branch Industrial Corridor was revamped to residential and offices, General Iron (a serial polluter of detrimental impact) was pushed to relocate to the South East side."

Katherine Field McCarter | Volunteer

"I think it's a crime that Chicago doesn't have a full bus system for the kids to get to school. A lot of families move around due to rent and home insecurity and they don't want to keep moving the kids from school to school, so they travel long distances to try to keep that school stability."

Shadan Tofighi | Future Steps Technologies, President

"This is an open ended question about the intersection of historical reckoning and transportation policy that I think about and struggle with this a lot. History tells us that a heavy-handed approach to planning (particularly transportation planning) can have very negative side effects if not well executed, but when considering major transportation infrastructure

investments like the RLE, it seems incomplete to not pair them with more transit supportive land uses. Is it correct to just build the line and leave the associated communities alone from a planning standpoint, or should some sort of policy be applied, and what do you think is the correct level of "heavy-handedness" for lack of better words? A lot of auto-dependent places in the city got there because they didn't have a choice."

Joshua Woods | Connetics Transportation Group, Planner I

NOTES

Kickoff and Introductions

- Facilitator Lilliane Webb centers this conversation on equity, power and personal storytelling, asking pillar members to reflect on their identities.
 - Webb states, "Each of us is going to engage and react with the history of how communities have been planned and how transportation and infrastructure have been made in different ways."
 - Webb adds, "Your relationship to power and privilege is an important step in redistributing power within inequitable systems."
- Webb asks the group, "How can we move through these discussions with a trauma informed lens so we are not recreating harm? What do we need from each other and let me know what you need from us as facilitators?"
 - Jordan Evangelista reflects on "our right to comfort," or valuing comfort at the cost of allowing people to share their lived experiences that "may make, particularly white people, uncomfortable." Evangelista asks the group to be open to listening and "sitting in this discomfort."
 - Lou Turner comments on addressing Black Chicagoans' rightful distrust of city government, "Given ... the rather horrible history of the City of Chicago when it comes to planning, the last comprehensive plan was in 1966 and that was in the midst of 'urban renewal equals negro removal.'" Turner describes a CMAP video made to promote the Red Line Extension in which people on the far South Side described the impact the project would have on their lives. Turner says a similar approach, centering real people's stories, could "help allay skepticism" regarding the City plan.
- What stories or context would you add to our overview around the challenges our pillar is seeking to address?
 - Shadan Tofighi echoes what Turner said, stating "it is not difficult to see" that the Red Line stops are few and far between on the South Side but fairly abundant on the North Side.

- Tsehaye Geralyn Hebert recounts how she began her disability rights activism. When she temporarily used a wheelchair to get around, buses would pass her or tell her to take the next one. She urges tech updates, particularly on the South Side, and more human-centered response training and equitable design.
- Benjamin Cosgrove, who works with Chicago Public School students, says that students are often late or absent due to missing a bus or train. He said students shouldn't have to rely on the CTA to get to school. Gaps in access to quality internet has also been a big issue since the COVID-19 pandemic began.
- Katherine Field McCarter: "I'm not thinking of a specific story of myself or others, but returning to links/articles that were shared at the very beginning of tonight's session, I appreciated the perspectives on persisting discrepancy in development heavily favoring white communities from [this WBEZ story](#) two days ago. It makes me think about the battle over the \$1.3 billion TIF for Lincoln Yards. The area's designation as 'blighted' was tenuous — with area residents and widespread Chicagoans testifying to question a huge subsidy for a wealthy developer in a wealthy neighborhood. I hope we can consider if the inappropriate usage of TIFs is exacerbating inequities in investment. From Lincoln Yards, to the 78, to One Central, there are major public subsidies that could be placed more appropriately and, in particular, in an HREIA framework."
- Cindy Fish presents We Will Chicago's proposal to extend the current meeting plan from 9 to 14 in order to allow more time for the Health and Race Equity Impact Assessment (HREIA) and historical reckoning.

Data-based decisions

- Fish presents data for assessing the group's questions and objectives. For example, access to broadband is highly unequal and breaks down across North-West/South and racial lines. Similarly, commute times to work are much longer on the West and South Side, partly due to the lack of adequate transportation. Industrial corridors (which emit harmful pollutants) are overwhelmingly clustered on the South and West sides. Finally, exposure to urban flooding is highly unequal. In Chicago, "87% of flood damage insurance claims were paid in communities of color."
- Turner suggests finding data on whether or not Altgeld Gardens is the most toxic lived environment in the U.S.
- Melvin Thompson put in the chat: "Viaducts on the south side are not safely passable right now due to the flooding."
- Fish walks through the process of developing a policy framework, including sample policy frameworks plans that informed city planning: ONENYC 2050, MEMPHIS 3.0 and EDMONTON CITY PLAN.
 - Fish then gives examples of objectives that are "too broad," "too focused" and "just right" related to this pillar's guiding question "How can we create infrastructure systems that are safe, equitable, and accessible to all, including those with disabilities and the most vulnerable?"

Menti short answer questions

- Group members brainstorm objectives using Mentimeter based on their pillar's guiding questions, which were refined in the five previous meetings.
- First question: How can we create infrastructure systems that are safe, equitable, and accessible to all, including those with disabilities and the most vulnerable?
 - "Plan primarily from the vantage point of residents who do not own cars."
 - "Fund and ensure implementation of the All Stations Accessibility Program to make all CTA stations ADA accessible."
 - "Attempt to minimize cost (money and time required) of using the service."
 - "Prioritize communities that have been identified as having the greatest needs"
- Second question: How can we create transportation networks that support greater connectivity by walking, biking, transit, and other more active and sustainable modes?
 - "More protected bike lanes and contiguous sidewalks"
 - "Connect local nodes of activities first; deprioritize commute to work routes"
 - "Build better sidewalks!"
 - "Reclaim space intended for cars... i.e., Cap the Kennedy"
- Third question: How do we balance the economic benefits of moving goods while mitigating negative impacts and equitably distribute burdens?
 - "Establish fees for number of carts (trains or trucks) moving through the city. Alternately ask for federal and even international (Canadian National) aid dependent on what goes through the city," Shadan Tofighi wrote in the chat.
 - "Create a public scorecard that determines if a proposed project does more harm to the community than the so-called benefit. This is done in Boston as part of its health-conscious corridor development work," Melvin Thompson wrote in the chat.
 - "Expand infrastructure to mitigate noise pollution (trees, walls)."
 - "Ensure that local residents are recruited to fill jobs in industrial corridors"
 - "Create low or no emission zones."
 - "Freight surcharge or tax."
 - "Support strong local economies to reduce the need for movement of goods. (Do we really need everything delivered?)"
 - "CMAP has interesting data on the off-peak and overnight delivery impacts (it's not what you think...frees up space during day and demand induced, while they still travel at night)," Leah Mooney wrote in the chat.
- Fourth question: How can we create a framework for investments in T&I that address past inequities (...) and ensure community priorities and goals are reflected?
 - "The TIF and subsidy system is seriously flawed. Earnestly invoke the 'but for' question on every subsidized development. Push developers to fund their own projects and infrastructure in wealthy communities."
 - "Begin investment in communities that have historically experienced the most disinvestment by the city."
 - "More transparency in the way project are selected and funded."
 - "Develop quality of life plans for all neighborhoods and ensure that development aligns with these plans"
 - "Review promises that haven't been realized yet."
- Fifth question: How can we leverage resources for transportation and infrastructure projects

that promote environmental sustainability and resilience?

- “Invest in protecting our shoreline”
- “Stop expanding/building new highways”
- “Create composting system to go along with garbage and recycling pickups”
- “Remove parking lots”
- “Fund electric vehicle charging stations”
- Electrify all fleets—buses, trains, etc.

RESOURCES

The 40-Year Fight to Clean Up One of America’s Most Polluted Projects

[Article on Altgeld Gardens, a public housing project in Chicago.](#)

CMAP Red Line Extension Project

[Video promoting Red Line Extension on the South Side of Chicago.](#)

Citywide Planning in Peer Cities

[Examples of other citywide plans.](#)

Visionary plan to cap the Kennedy Expressway with a park might still happen

[Article on the Cap the Kennedy project proposal](#)

We Walk in Lawndale: A Celebration of Black Community

[Upcoming community event in Lawndale.](#)

NEXT STEPS

- A feedback form on how the meeting was conducted will be emailed out to participants
- There’s [an event this Sunday](#) in Lawndale called “We Walk in Lawndale: A Celebration of Black Community” for any interested