

2021

CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY ROADMAP



OUR CENTRAL CITY
IS BACK FOR ALL CHICAGOANS







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FOREWORD BY MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT



Dear Fellow Chicagoans,

2020 was an unprecedented year of hardship for our city. The worst public health crisis in a century, paired with the worst economic crisis in 75 years and the most civil unrest seen in 50 years placed residents, businesses, and public servants in unfathomably difficult positions for far longer than any of us could have imagined. While all our 77 neighborhoods felt and endured this pain, Chicago's Central Planning Region—roughly bounded in parts as far to the north by Fullerton Avenue, the south by 35th Street, the west by Ashland Avenue, and the east by Lake Michigan—was hit particularly hard. As COVID-19 forced large employers in the area to adapt to new ways of working, a devastating ripple effect washed over the small businesses that support the hundreds of thousands of residents and workers who commute and spend their day downtown. On top of that, many commercial and residential buildings were damaged as a result of looting and our iconic cultural institutions and landmarks—from our theaters and museums to Cloud Gate and Navy Pier—were shuttered. The sheer magnitude of these challenges is best understood by contextualizing the role that the Central Planning Region plays within our city. In addition to serving as our primary economic center representing half of the city's jobs, the Central Planning Region also features vibrant residential neighborhoods, houses many of our city's shopping districts, contains countless cultural venues, and attracts millions of tourists each year. The socioeconomic activity generated in the center of the city is foundational to the success of our entire city. That's why my administration quickly worked to revitalize this critical section of our city in the short-term and has already begun the planning and engagement process to secure a long-term recovery.

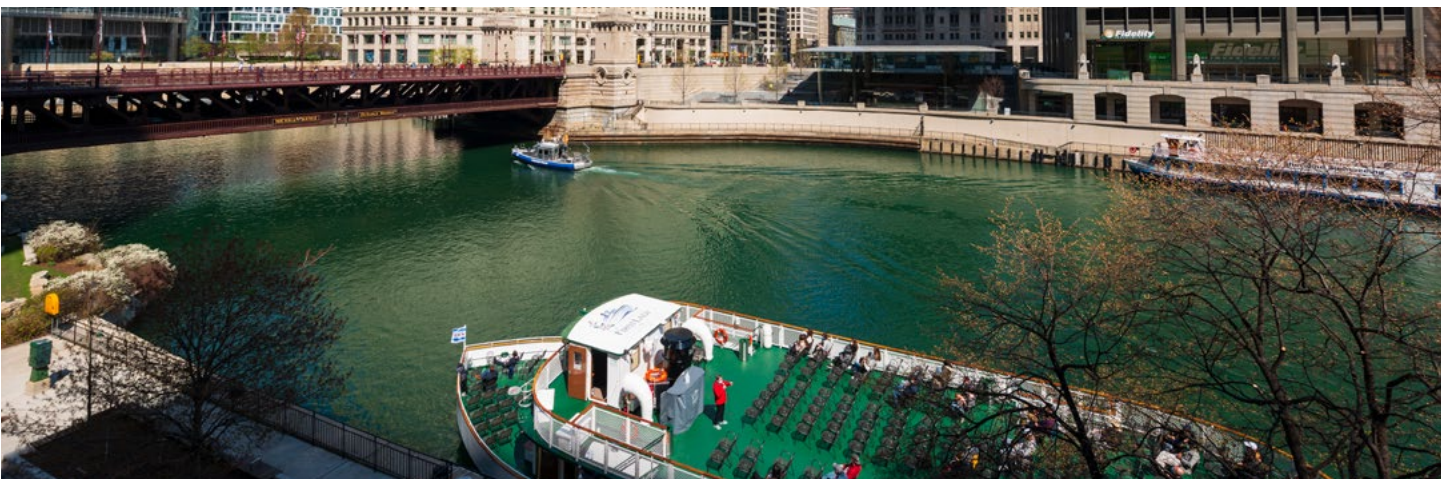
To do so, we drew on the strength of Chicago's greatest asset: its people. My office, supported by the Neighborhood and Economic Development team, the Department of Planning and Development, and the Chicago Central Area Committee, assembled a working group comprised of business and civic leaders, community and neighborhood advocates, and public officials to begin the process of reopening our Central City and

reimagining the role it will play in our city moving forward. Instead of placing emphasis on figuring out how to return to the pre-pandemic status quo, we focused on setting a new trajectory for the Central City that prioritizes equity and inclusion in addition to adapting to a "new normal."

Over the course of several months, working groups met to develop immediate and implementable actions to allow Chicago to retain its status as one of the world's few truly global cities. This work was also done while constantly recognizing that the Central City does not exist in a vacuum, and that any changes we seek to make within it should also benefit the entirety of our city. Thus, the actions and recommendations outlined in this report are meant to strengthen and leverage the linkages between the Central City and outlying neighborhoods that allow both to thrive in unison.

This past year, we were forced to endure adversities unlike any we have ever experienced before. Though we will never forget the lives lost, the businesses permanently closed, or the properties damaged, I remain confident that Chicago will emerge from this pandemic stronger than ever before. Not because of luck or coincidence, but because of the historic resilience of our residents. We have overcome a Great Fire, a Great Depression. I know that we will overcome this Great Pandemic with the same mettle and tenacity of the generations that preceded us. This report—as well as the recommendations that will be implemented in the coming weeks, months, and years—are our first steps on the road to revitalizing our Central City and will further our ongoing work to rejuvenate our entire city. It is my hope that every resident will join my administration and I in this mission to ensure the everlasting prosperity of our city.

Sincerely, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot





I: PURPOSE AND PROCESS

COVID-19s impact on the daily routines of hundreds of thousands of downtown workers, residents and visitors has created unprecedented hardships and opportunities that can help community stakeholders quickly prepare for a more vibrant urban environment. The “Central City Recovery Roadmap” provides short-term actions and recommendations to revitalize the central area over the next three years and outlines its vital role on behalf of the entire city.

Chicago’s central area is the city’s point of origin, its economic foundation, its cultural epicenter, and its transportation nexus. Two centuries of evolution and transformation have made it a global center for businesses, residents, students, and tourists.

In the decade leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the central area was expanding far beyond its traditional Loop footprint, resulting in a dynamic, mixed-use environment that physically extended far into adjacent neighborhoods within the Near North, Near West and Near South community areas.

Businesses flourished. More than 75 companies had recently relocated to downtown, including Facebook, Google, Pinterest, Salesforce, Walgreens, ConAgra Foods, and McDonald’s. In 2020, with more than 400 corporate headquarters, the central area represented half of all jobs in the city.

Residential development was also expanding pre-pandemic, with more than 13,000 residential units completed over the previous four years. At the end of 2018, more than 255,000 people were living in the central area, up from 145,000 in 2000, the fastest growth rate of any downtown area in the country.

Thanks to public improvements like the Riverwalk, Millennium Park and a revitalized theater district, tourism also blossomed. Tourism grew from 46.2 million visitors in 2012 to near nearly 60 million travelers in 2019.

EARLY CHALLENGES AND FORMAL RESPONSES

The onset of COVID-19 in early 2020 caused unprecedented disruptions to business, work, retailing, tourism and education downtown and across the city, radically changing day-to-day habits and behaviors.

As restaurants, bars and shops closed, many other downtown employers shifted to remote work, especially banking and financial services firms; accounting and legal agencies; consulting, marketing and advertising firms; media and publishing companies; architecture and engineering entities; and many information-technology firms.

By spring, pedestrian activity dropped by an estimated 80 percent and hotel occupancy dropped to 20%. By summer, with the citywide unemployment rate exceeding 12 percent (compared to 3.8 percent pre-COVID) and many people adhering to social distancing protocols, the central area was virtually empty. By the

end of 2020, downtown had a record amount of unleased office space, at about 21.4 million square feet.

To address the citywide impact of COVID-19, the City of Chicago coordinated multiple strategies, including the implementation of federal assistance through the CARES Act, the American Rescue Plan, the Payment Protection Program, and other sources. Other local accomplishments to date included:

- **Forward Together Recovery Task Force Report (July 2020)**
- **Small business COVID-relief funding (March 2020)**
- **Delayed business license expiration dates (from March 2020 till July 2021)**
- **Fast-track approvals for outdoor dining + signs (Spring 2020)**
- **Small Business Improvement Fund grants (2021-2023)**
- **CPS hybrid learning for K-8th grades (February 2021)**
- **United Center vaccine site opened (February 2021)**
- **Vaccine Phase 1C (March 2021)**
- **Chicago Parks + Pools, Lakefront, Riverwalk (Spring 2021)**
- **Chicago arenas open at 25% capacity (April 2021)**
- **1.5 million Chicago residents vaccinated (April 2021)**
- **Phase 4 Reopening (April 2021)**
- **CPS high school hybrid learning (April 2021)**
- **Vaccine Phase 2 (April 2021)**

Thanks to vaccine availability and related public and private efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, the central area entered the spring of 2021 on the cusp of people-oriented revitalization and more traditional social and professional interaction.

Widespread vaccine distribution and reduced rates of COVID-19 infection will lead to:

- **A progressively greater return to workplaces by employees**
- **Reactivation of the food, beverage and entertainment sectors**
- **Increased use of the transit system to commute and visit destinations**
- **Growth in regional tourism and high demand for performance and culture events**



I: PURPOSE AND PROCESS

RAPID RESPONSE FOR CENTRAL AREA RECOVERY

To maximize the central area's reopening, the Office of the Mayor engaged over 150 people across government, business, institutions, and the residential community. Starting in November 2020, these stakeholders engaged through brainstorming sessions, webinars, subcommittee meetings, and break-out discussion groups.

The process was facilitated by:

- *City of Chicago staff led by the Office of the Mayor, the Departments of Planning (DPD), Transportation (CDOT) and Cultural Affairs (DCASE), as well as World Business Chicago (WBC) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)*
- *The Chicago Central Area Committee (CCAC) and its members*
- *Leaders from residential and business groups*
- *And Bloomberg Associates*

In preparing this Recovery Roadmap, several supplemental planning documents and initiatives informed the process including: A Central City for All of Chicago/CCAC (2019); Forward Together, Chicago Recovery Task Force Report/City of Chicago (2020); Economy, Destination, Livability/CCAC (2020); and Chicago Central Business District: Near, Medium and Long-Term Strategies/Bloomberg Associates (2020).

The following four subcommittees and corresponding co-chairs lead the discussions and helped to identify goals and actions.

Business and Commerce

- *Kelly Welsh (Civic Committee of the Commercial Club)*
- *Jack Lavin (Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce)*

Transportation and Mobility

- *Commissioner Gia Biagi (CDOT)*
- *President Dorval Carter (CTA)*

Culture and Tourism

- *Commissioner Mark Kelly (DCASE)*
- *Michael Fassnacht (WBC)*

Residents and Community

- *Bonnie Sanchez-Carlson (Near South Planning Board)*
- *Debby Gershbein (Streeterville Organization of Active Residents)*

WORKING ACROSS SUBCOMMITTEES

Each of the subcommittees generated recommendations, goals and actions related to multiple sectors including job growth, business success, storefront activation, entertainment, vibrant street-life and public spaces, high-capacity transportation, diverse housing and public safety. A common theme that emerged across the four subcommittees is that culture has a unique role to play in returning social and economic vitality to Chicago. The benefits of prioritizing cultural activation include confidence building that the world is emerging from a time of crisis to one where it is safer to return to work, shops, schools and play, improved public safety as a result of more people being back on the streets, and economic benefits from increased foot traffic and consumer spending. Multiple initiatives have also been considered as opportunities to connect all of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods and to provide powerful ways to address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion.





II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY

A DYNAMIC MOMENT

Chicago's government, civic and business communities have been addressing the pandemic conditions directly since March 2020. They have also each evolved positions and initiatives to address the recovery. This has occurred in a dynamic context, a transition from a full lockdown to a gradual reopening and now a gathering momentum tied to the vaccine roll-out.

Essential workers have been leading the way in Chicago, and many are working in our Central City, in hospitals, on transit, at stores and running our government. Others have been carefully returning to workplaces, with employers starting hybrid working and partial office re-openings and announcing future dates for this to happen. Building owners and managers have been upgrading facilities and equipment.

Health considerations have been to the fore throughout. Mass vaccine rollout and the federal stimulus bills have raised optimism for the coming months, this summer and beyond.

A DYNAMIC STRATEGY

Events have been unfolding quickly over this past year and this dynamic context is expected to continue, so recovery actions and strategies must be flexible as well. Building from the rapid engagement process undertaken over the last six months, four overlapping and integrated themes have been identified:

1. **COMMUNICATE:** spreading the word on achieving a safe, rapid recovery and that Chicago is open.
2. **ACTIVATE:** creating a splash for Chicago, intensifying civic and public life.
3. **FULL RETURN:** maximizing workers, residents, shoppers and visitors in the Central City.
4. **INVEST:** in services and capital projects, a vision for the Central City, and wider structural issues – social, economic or fiscal.

This Roadmap provides immediate and near-term goals and actions across work streams. It has been developed as a nimble and flexible playbook that can respond as conditions or opportunities change. The following headlines actions for each theme. The Appendix of this document provides an Implementation Matrix as well as summaries of the great work carried out by the subcommittees in Economy, Destination, Community and Mobility realms.

THEME 1: COMMUNICATE

City government, public agencies and private and non-profit partners will continue to spread the word on achieving a safe, rapid recovery of the central area through vaccinations, updated public policy guidelines, and enhanced accessibility for individuals that are fully vaccinated. Specific initiatives that

will help communicate public health and safety improvements include:

Public Health Guidelines and Vaccinations

- *At the onset of the pandemic, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) mobilized quickly to ensure that all Chicagoans were able to access trusted information about the local COVID-19 response through an online Coronavirus Response Center and a call center.*
- *Continue to organize vaccination events and easy-to-access vaccination sites citywide.*
- *Continue to update opening and travel guidelines based on metrics and CDC and CDPH guidance.*
- *Provide incentives for residents to get vaccinated.*
- *Ensure that vaccinated people can be clearly identified and can begin to attend gatherings safely.*



- Reopening public amenities and private venues.*
- Activating public spaces with arts, culture and recreation.*
- Supporting and expanding outdoor dining and business.*
- Safely returning to offices and in-person events.*
- *Employers and residents are encouraged to announce their business and venue opening date and can participate and share on social media.*

Return to Transit: Chicago Transit Authority Initiatives

- *CTA recently launched "When You're Ready, We're Ready" campaign to communicate their commitment to provide the best possible customer experience.*
- *CTA will continue expanded vehicle and station cleaning activities.*
- *Full bus and rail service have been provided throughout the pandemic and capacity data is being communicated to users in real time.*
- *CTA staff and volunteers will continue to distribute Travel Healthy Kits (24k distributed to date).*
- *Free disposable masks are available on ALL buses and rail stations.*
- *CTA will explore promotional reduced and new fare product options.*



II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY

- Ongoing CTA infrastructure improvements include Red-Purple Modernization, Red line Extension, Your New Blue Line, and Electric bus deployment.
- Employers are encouraged to promote and provide transit benefits to employees, reduce subsidies for parking and driving, share links to CTA's website for information and videos, communicate return plans with transit providers, and to allow a flexible work schedule to prevent crowding.
- Everyone is encouraged to take public transit, to wear a mask, and share on social media.

Return to Transit: Metra Initiatives

- At the onset of the pandemic, Metra has been utilizing extra cleaning workforce and resources including disinfecting train cars and multiple station cleanings per week along with additional safety initiatives.
- Ridership Dashboard facilitates safe distancing by sharing train crowding levels.
- Hospital-grade air filters and fresh air dampers have been installed with air circulated every 4 minutes.
- New high-tech air and purification system are planned on 700 cars.
- Metra has been operating on alternate weekday schedules, and not a single case of infection has been traced back to riding Metra trains.

Public Safety Initiatives: Five Pillars from the Chicago Police Department

Like many other cities nationwide, Chicago experienced an increase in violence following the COVID-19 pandemic and the protests stemming from the May 2020 murder of George Floyd. Under the leadership of the Mayor and new Police Superintendent David Brown, the city quickly developed a new framework to address this spike in violence, centered around 5 focus areas:

- 1. Community Policing:** intended to build positive relationships within the community and to enable safety at protests and other large gatherings.
- 2. Public Safety Drills:** through the creation of a Community Safety Team designed to partner with Chicago communities.
- 3. Summer Operations Center:** through public safety drills which coordinate responses across multiple departments and creation of a Summer Operations Center to enable effective responses; deployment of infrastructure assets in neighborhoods.
- 4. Street Outreach/Violence Prevention:** by putting additional financial resources towards violence prevention and street outreach.

- 5. Public-Private Surveillance Sharing:** between businesses, city, and police.

Workplace Return Commitments

- As vaccination rates continue to rise and coronavirus positivity rates continue to decline, many employers will transition their employees from remote work to return back to their offices in-person.
- Promoting the Chicago Loop Alliance Back to Work Toolkit.
- Coordination between Building Owners and Managers advocacy and other organizations on planning return to office.
- Employers are encouraged to support employees in getting vaccinated, to discuss return plans with their property management team and identify areas of concern, assess office environment for potential modifications, and publicize plans for return.

THEME 2: ACTIVATE

Multiple initiatives will generate a thriving street and cultural scene along with revived enterprises, venues and institutions across the Central City and Chicago. Specifically, leisure tourism is anticipated to be an economic sector poised for significant near-term and sustained growth. Chicago's cultural landscape will be funded and leveraged to return vibrancy to the city, support the comeback of artists and cultural institutions, and attract visitors from the Midwest and afar.

Expand Outdoor Dining + Retail

Outdoor dining and fast track approval of sign permits have provided a lifeline for many restaurants citywide during the pandemic. Chicago acted quickly and had the same number of outdoor dining establishments as New York City by the summer of 2020. In Chicago 194 establishments utilized 37 fully closed streets, 198 establishments utilized 183 parking lots, and over 1,000 restaurants or cafés have activated Chicago's sidewalks. Actions have already been undertaken to continue to expand outdoor dining activities in 2021.



II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY

- *Extension of Expanded Outdoor Dining ordinance passed by the Chicago City Council Dec 2020.*
- *Support existing and returning outdoor dining locations.*
- *The city will continue to explore ways to expand to include outdoor retail activity.*
- *Permits for outdoor dining are administered by DCASE, CDOT, and BACP.*
- *Employers and residents are encouraged to: support local restaurants and stores including organizing happy hours and lunches from local restaurants.*

Chicago Alfresco Grants

Choose Chicago, the City's tourism bureau, is providing \$2.3 million in grants to approved applicants of projects intended to help create more outdoor public space thanks to sponsor Diageo, owner of brands such as Guinness, Smirnoff, and Crown Royal.

This new program is part of the City's broader initiative to open streets and create places for dining, public life, community, arts, culture, walking and biking.

Chambers of commerce and other neighborhood community groups are encouraged to think beyond emergency traffic barricades and construction cones to propose and build design-forward outdoor community spaces.

The first round of applicants were selected May 18th, but applications are continuing to be accepted from organizations interested in creating longer-term active community spaces that support outdoor dining or highlight community-focused placemaking, support community identity, and provide opportunities for public enjoyment. Interested neighborhood organizations can find more information at chicago.gov/alfresco.

A Spotlight on Chicago's Cultural Landscape

Arts and culture will play a prominent role in the economic recovery and revitalization of Chicago's downtown and its neighborhoods. The intent of these new citywide festivals is to spotlight programs and events already planned, attracting a greater audience throughout the citywide effort, and to seek out partnerships and resources to assist in providing a variety of free and ticketed events for 2021.

Chicago in Tune

- *A new citywide festival that celebrates all genres of music.*
- *Showcasing our world-class venues, clubs, restaurants, and neighborhood street festivals.*
- *Utilizing newly launched Band Roster (200 musicians).*

• *Working with Choose Chicago for tourist and visitor marketing.*

• *Targeting August 2021 through end of 2021.*

Conjuring Chicago's Creative Spirit

• *A new citywide creative festival to showcase a vast array of arts and cultural events.*

• *To be aligned with programming at theaters, museums, and dance halls.*

• *Includes events such as CAC Open House, Chicago's Ideas Week, Chicago Humanities Festival.*

• *Targeting October 2021.*

Holiday Joy

• *Repackaging Chicago's seasonal programs and events into a coordinated and integrated promotion to experience holiday joy downtown and in the neighborhoods.*

• *Spotlight signature events Lincoln Park Zoo Lights, Christkindl Market, Light Festivals, Millennium Park Tree Lighting, Caroling at Cloud Gate, and more.*

• *Targeting November-December 2021.*

Chicago Presents

The city recognizes that many performance venues lack the funding to re-start and re-open to safely welcome audiences back. To help address this issue, DCASE has created a new grant program, Chicago Presents. Emerging and established cultural presenters are invited to submit proposals for free live, in-person concerts and events, spanning all music genres, performance, and dance that activate Chicago's streets, plazas, and parks. Additionally, presenters may select up to two solo musicians and/or bands from the Chicago Band Roster to play at their event. The Band Roster is a new resource listing over 200 Chicago-based musicians of all genres, created as part of the 2021 Year of Chicago Music.

- *A new program to support FREE in-person cultural events and arts/venue reopening.*
- *50-100 safe reopening events citywide supported by up to 100 grants from \$5,000-30,000.*
- *Applications opened April 20th at chicago.gov/music.*



II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY

Storefront Art and Activation: A Magnificent Mile Association Initiative

As part of any successful reopening, the pedestrian experience is paramount. During the pandemic, some retailers had to shut down and many boarded up their storefronts. These vacant and boarded up storefronts need to be reactivated. Business associations and property owners all over the City are addressing this issue, from the most high-profile corridor along Michigan Avenue to the neighborhood commercial corridor in each community. The Magnificent Mile® Association is a non-profit membership organization with a mission of preserving, promoting and enhancing one of Chicago's most unique, multi-use neighborhoods.

- *Magnificent Mile Association (MMA) + Facility – “Rapt on the Mile” artistic building wrap by Nick Cave and Bob Faust.*
- *Seed funding provided by World Business Chicago and Choose Chicago.*
- *Targeting installation in June along with other placemaking and activation initiatives.*
- *Employers, building owners, and residents are encouraged to donate to the MMA, to activate more vacant storefronts, and to participate and share on social media.*

Placemaking event “Sundays on State” – A Chicago Loop Alliance Initiative

Creating new and exciting street life experiences will be an important part of revitalizing the Central City. Temporary street

closures to allow outdoor dining have been implemented throughout the city, but less so in the Loop. To address this discrepancy, Chicago Loop Alliance is planning a new special event on Sundays this summer along State Street, the City's historic retail corridor. CLA's services and projects are in place to realize the vision of keeping the Loop a vibrant global business district and recognized world-class destination.

- *A new special event street closure along State Street from Madison to Lake.*
- *Activation and special event programming on Sundays starting July 11th.*
- *Employers, building owners, and residents are encouraged to become a sponsor, to provide programming, and to participate and share on social media.*

Community Organization-led Gatherings

Chicago is a city of neighborhoods and the central area is no different. In response to the pandemic and the concerns from the civil unrest last summer, many community groups have organized health and safety informational webinars throughout 2020. To assist in the vaccine rollout, resident organizations have also been working with local officials at vaccination centers and events in their neighborhoods. Looking ahead to the remainder of this year, below is a snapshot of what some of these groups have planned:





II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY

- A Cross Community Clean Up Challenge was held on May 1st with neighborhood organizations and the Keep America Beautiful organization. The event spanned from the South Loop to Streeterville with resident organizations competing with one another to see who can pick up the most garbage. Over 240 volunteers participated in the 3-hour event and collected almost 300 garbage bags.
- Resident groups will continue meeting with their police district via webinars and in-person gatherings such as Walk'n'Talks and Coffees with Cops.
- Architectural Walking Tours coordination between Chicago Architecture Center with Streeterville Organization of Active Residents, River North Residents Association, The Magnificent Mile Association.
- River North Residents Association is planning to hold their annual Taste of River North (tentatively August 20-21st).
- Streeterville Organization of Active Residents is organizing the event "Streeterville's Got Talent" for November 6th.
- Near North Unity Program has been providing groceries and hot meals for seniors and homeless in their neighborhood.
- Near South Planning Board is planning to hold their annual Printers Row Lit Fest on September 11-12th, and is also planning to return the program Fitness at the Field for Sundays this summer.
- West Loop Community Organization is planning to create a video montage called "Who are the People in Your Neighborhood" to share the stories of impact, resilience, and hardship that all our neighbors endured so that, together, we can heal. WLCO will be asking community members to talk about what their last year was like and how they have persevered.
- Chinatown Chamber of Commerce has scheduled the Summer Fair for July 17-18th and Dragon Boat Race in Ping Tom Park for Aug 28th.

Community-Led Action Highlight: River North Clean Streets Program by River North Residents Association

River North Clean Streets program has benefited hundreds of disadvantaged Chicagoans in the River North community. In 2016, RNRA partnered with Cara and their social enterprise, Cleanslate, to provide training, support and transitional employment to people affected by poverty (and often the challenges of recovery, domestic violence, episodic homelessness, and incarceration). Through the performance of much-needed weekend street cleaning services, RNCS interns rebuild hope, self-esteem and opportunity for themselves and their families. Over the last four years, the work included weekend cleaning on up to 26 blocks, over 1,700 bags of garbage, and over 700 bags of recyclables have been removed from these streets, over 300 interns have participated in the program, and over 100 interns secured permanent employment

at an average hourly wage of \$13.76. Block sponsorship is \$26/week for one side of a block and RNRA asks sponsors for a 6-month commitment which totals \$676 for the seasonal support. Cleanings take place on Saturdays and Sundays. RNRA was able to secure a \$6,000 commitment from each of the identified corporate partners for this season (listed below).

- 37 blocks will get thorough weekend cleaning from May 8 through October 31, 2021.
- Utilizing workforce from Cleanslate to provide transformational work for highly motivated job seekers.
- Collaboration with local business owners and sponsorship provided by River North businesses, Cresco Labs, PharmaCann, and Salesforce.

THEME 3: FULL RETURN

A full return will build on the growing transition seen in the first months of 2021 and will maximize the number of workers, shoppers and visitors arriving in and the fully experiencing the Central City.

Chicago Public Schools

As of Monday, April 19th, all students from pre-k through 12th-grade who want to learn in person were able to do so. Moving past the pandemic will require even more substantial resources, and the district will continue to share its plans to ensure all students, staff, and families have what they need to heal from the past year and move forward toward a brighter future. Educators, parents and students should prepare for full return this Aug 30th, pending health guidance.

Return to City Markets

Vendors, market managers and customers worked together to ensure that the 2020 farmers market season was safe and healthy for everyone while providing access to fresh fruits and vegetables throughout Chicago. 2021's farmers market season will build and expand on those successes with markets in various locations from May through October 2021.

Night Out in the Parks

Night Out in the Parks brings cultural events to parks in Chicago's neighborhoods throughout the year. Chicagoans and visitors alike, enjoy the breadth of world-class events in every one of the city's 77 community areas and all 50 wards. In its ninth year, the 2021 Night Out in the Parks program makes community parks safe havens and hubs of cultural activity. From theater performances and concerts to community workshops, nature-based programs, dance performances, festivals, and more. To make this happen, the Chicago Park District has partnered with local arts and community organizations and have planned approximately 350 free events and 100 free movies in neighborhood parks citywide from July through October 2021.



II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY



Millennium Park Programming and Maggie Daley Park Reopening

Pre-pandemic Millennium Park welcomed 20 million visitors each year and has hosted over 500 arts and culture programs, over 20,000 yoga participants and 100,000 ice skaters. The art and architecture in Millennium Park continue to define it as one of the world's leading authorities on public art in an outdoor urban setting. It is here that each visitor can indulge in a unique artistic experience while being able to admire the Chicago skyline as a subtle backdrop. Summer concerts at Millennium Park have been planned to be announced in the near term. Maggie Daley Park's ribbon ice-skating rink was open to the public this past winter, the mini golf course opened on April 30th, and both the Climbing Wall and the Play Garden will open Memorial Day weekend.

Return to Navy Pier

Historic Navy Pier is an iconic landmark in the fabric of Chicago and stands as the world's largest public pier. Pre-pandemic, Navy Pier was a top-attended leisure destination in the Midwest, attracting more than 9 million guests annually. Since last spring, the pier has been closed to the public and its vast array of arts, cultural, educational, entertainment, and special events programming had been temporarily shut down. Outdoor spaces at Navy Pier opened April 30th, Fireworks on Saturdays started May 1st, and full pier reopening is scheduled in mid-May.

Return to In-Person Conventions at McCormick Place

With over 2.6 million square feet of exhibit space, McCormick Place is the largest and most flexible use convention center in North America. Cancelled convention shows during the pandemic would have generated about \$2 billion in spending, with an estimated attendance of 1.6 million people. In-person conventions have been scheduled for summer 2021 in compliance with Illinois Department of Public Health and City Department of Health. Healthy Meetings Chicago provides a digital platform highlighting plans to convention floor health safety initiatives.

Return to In-Person Chicago Architecture Center Tours

The Chicago Architecture Center is a nonprofit cultural organization with tours, exhibitions, programs and events for all ages. Their mission is to inspire people to discover why design matters. For more than 50 years, CAC educators, 450 volunteer docents and 150 guest services volunteers have shared the stories of Chicago architecture with millions of Chicagoans and visitors. Architecture River Cruise and CAC Center opened for 3 days/week on April 17th while the CAC Center will be fully open on May 22nd. Walking Tours are currently limited to 6 until health guidelines expanded.

THEME 4: INVEST

Investing in the Central City will strengthen Chicago as a whole. Investment will include program and service operating funds, capital investment in infrastructure, public spaces and public facilities, arts and culture venues, private sector investment in new development and cross sector partnerships to create inclusive and equitable outcomes. The following actions focus on investments for the near term as more planning will be needed to develop investment priorities beyond 2021 to address longer-term fiscal and capital needs.

Connect Central City to Neighborhood Growth

Under the leadership of Commissioner Maurice D. Cox, City planning staff were reconfigured in the fall of 2019 to create seven planning regions and a citywide planning division. This departmental shift allowed for planning staff to focus on the needs of a particular geography while still providing coordinated planning citywide. The City's 2021 reopening and recovery initiatives and activation programming have been created to ensure that both the central area and our neighborhoods are given initial support needed for reactivation and reopening actions. More planning and engagement work will be needed as the city continues to guide future growth and prioritize capital resources.



II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY

- *INVEST South/West an unprecedented community improvement marshalling resources of City departments, community organizations, and corporate and philanthropic partners toward 10 communities on Chicago's South and West Sides.*
- *We Will Citywide plan 2020-2023 is a citywide planning initiative that will encourage neighborhood growth and vibrancy while addressing social and economic inequities that impair Chicago's legacy as a global city.*
- *Chicago Central Area Plan needs updating to provide a new vision, priorities and implementation tools for the next decade.*

Provide Equitable Job Opportunities Connecting all Residents to Central City Jobs

Several entities in Chicago have been working to provide equitable job opportunities to connect unemployed or underutilized Chicago residents with better access to jobs. Employers and developers should collaborate with these groups to ensure all Chicagoans have access to high quality jobs:

- *Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership: includes 90+ community-based orgs, American Job Centers, satellite sites and sector-driven centers.*
- *Skills for Chicagoland's Future: identifies employer hiring needs, matches with qualified unemployed job seekers, and provides pathway programs to prepare applicants.*
- *P33: promotes Chicagoland's most diverse tech workforce, comprised of 50% people of color and women, provides Talent Development Pathways.*
- *Hire 360: strengthens the participation of underrepresented populations in the construction sector.*
- *Chicago Apprentice Network: builds job applicant capacity and connections via experience in corporate account management, client support, financial analysis, human resources, and IT.*

Enhance the Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Experience through CTA, Metra, CDOT and Divvy Initiatives

Cross collaboration between CDOT and Chicago's transit agencies has been and continues to be a critical component to the City's recovery. While transit use substantially decreased during the pandemic, bicycle and sidewalk uses have increased. Creating a better user experience for these multi-modal options is a short-term priority.

- *Enhance transit transfers with better wayfinding at main transit points.*
- *Explore more multi-modal fare products such as joint bike rental and transit fares.*
- *Improve multi-modal connections including across pedestrian, bike, transit and car modes.*

- *Create a continuous and expanded bicycle network connecting the Central City to all the surrounding neighborhoods.*

Focus on Strengthening Central City Commercial Corridors

Brick-and-mortar retail industry was already struggling pre-pandemic and with changing shopping habits to e-commerce, this trend is expected to continue, and potentially worsen even for even the strongest commercial corridors. Three corridors in the Central City, in particular, have been struggling due to the pandemic impact: the shopping tourist destination Michigan Avenue, the historic heart of the City's financial district LaSalle Street, and the Loop's historic shopping corridor State Street.

- *Collaboration across Chicago DPD, the Magnificent Mile Association, and Chicago Loop Alliance on corridor planning to address changing real estate demands and post-pandemic recovery.*
- *Address future roles and market potential of key historic economic corridors of LaSalle Street, Michigan Avenue, and State Street experiencing loss of retail, office, and hotel tenants.*
- *Streamline regulatory and financial assistance processes for adaptive reuse.*
- *Targeting 2021-2022.*

Consider New Incentive Tools such as Business Improvement Districts (BID)

Many of Chicago's commercial corridors have relied on the establishment of Special Service Area districts which provides a funding mechanism to pay for local improvements such as annual plantings, enhanced security measures, business support and training, and streetscape signage and improvements. While this financing tool has been somewhat effective, the drawbacks of SSAs are that the tax assessments are formulaic, and the boundaries are limited in area. DPD is undertaking research and review of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

- *BIDs are common in most large cities in the country encompassing popular commercial areas. Illinois is the only state without BID legislation, so state legislation action is required.*
- *BIDs allow flexibility in assessment formula and their boundaries are larger and regional so it can provide a more holistic approach.*

Promote and Support Private Sector Investment

New projects from the private sector have continued to be proposed, even during the pandemic. The high-level and longer-range goals identified below will need to be refined into actionable items as part of additional planning and engagement efforts.



II. CENTRAL CITY RECOVERY STRATEGY



- Attract high growth sectors including healthcare, life sciences, food industry, agribusiness, tech, film and TV.
- Expand anchor sectors including banking, accounting, law, management, marketing, advertising, architecture, engineering, entertainment economy.
- Support emerging sectors such as quantum-computing, cannabis and hemp, and the green economy.
- Leverage federal and state assistance to improve infrastructure, access, and the public realm to create active business districts.
- Investigate solutions to long-term concerns with state and local structural fiscal issues and risks.

Support the Arts and Culture Economy

Announced on April 23, 2021, Arts 77 is a citywide arts recovery and reopening plan for all of Chicago's 77 community areas, representing an initial investment of over \$60 million from the Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events, the Chicago Parks District, other city agencies and private funding to support local artists and organizations.

- Expands access and participation in the arts citywide.
- Prioritizes employment of creative workers through City programs and services.
- Deepens public sector investment in the creative sector through financial support and cultural policy.
- New and expanded programs including the Neighborhood Access Program, the Chicago Band Roster and Chicago Presents grant programs, Culture in My Neighborhood (a \$40 million collaboration by DCASE, the Chicago Park District, and Chicago Public Library), Individual Artists Program grants, Artist Response Program grants, and \$18.5 million in art and infrastructure investments.

Support More Affordable Housing

Attracting more residents and providing more affordable housing options in the city's central area through policies was a key goal identified by the Residents and Community subcommittee. Mayor Lightfoot introduced the revised ARO, the Affordable Requirements Ordinance for inclusionary housing, to City Council in March 2021. The revised ARO expands off-site options that target Chicagoans in the greatest need for affordable rental housing, while also focusing on anti-displacement measures that allow long-time residents to remain in their communities and benefit from redevelopment. The revised ARO also encourages the production of more affordable and family-sized units, while also maintaining much-needed funding for current programs that support thousands of low-income renters. The revised ordinance increases the affordable requirement downtown, in certain neighborhoods with low current levels of affordable housing, and in neighborhoods facing displacement of low-income residents from 10% to 20%. It also reduces the number of units that may be paid out with in-lieu fees from 75% to 50%.

- 2021 Affordable Requirements Ordinance passed April 21, 2021.
- Provide City-supported affordable housing above and beyond ARO, such as in Fulton Market and with C40 RFP in Downtown Loop.
- Property owners and developers will be encouraged to build more affordable housing units in the Central City.
- Residents can support the need for more affordable housing options to grow into a mixed-income community.



III: NEXT STEPS

Keeping Recovery Momentum Going

Just over one year ago, on April 23, 2020, the City of Chicago launched the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force (RTF). The Taskforce was Co-Chaired by Mayor Lightfoot and former White House Chief of Staff Sam Skinner and led by a group of experts from a wide range of industries, regional government leaders, community-based partners and policymakers. Building off the RTF report issued last summer, this Central City Recovery Roadmap brings a short-term focus on the actions needed for a strong downtown recovery. Successful short-term outcomes, following the actions outlined in this report, would include: full trains and buses for workday commutes, safe and thriving festivals and special events, and pedestrian counts and vacancy rates back to pre-pandemic levels. Medium- to long-term successful outcomes include: increasing HQ relocations, significant growth in new jobs especially in emerging economic sectors, significantly more affordable housing units in the Central City, collaboration between public and private investments to provide more green spaces for residents, and providing high-quality school choices to retain more families downtown.

Through this collective call to action, and under these unprecedented circumstances, Chicago will emerge stronger than ever, with the Central City playing a major role in citywide revival. By working together on all these actions and initiatives, Chicago can continue to address the systemic inequities that have undermined its success for decades. These social and economic disparities touch nearly every aspect of Chicago life and government. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting recession further underscore these issues and the need for Chicago, its leaders and its citizens to develop a more equitable and strategic path forward.

The actions outlined in this Roadmap have been planned and designed to align with ongoing City initiatives such as Invest South/West and the fundamental principles of equity, diversity, and resiliency within the planning work that has started with the three-year We Will citywide plan. The challenges impacting the Central City and its critical commercial corridors are not going to be solved overnight or in the short-term. The city, led by the Department of Planning and Development, will continue the planning work to focus on the critical commercial corridors along Michigan Avenue and LaSalle Street as well as start the planning for an update to the Central Area Plan to be completed alongside the citywide plan. There will be many more opportunities for stakeholders and the public to provide input to help guide the central area's future growth.

This Roadmap clearly acknowledges that the City's ongoing recovery initiatives are critical to a revitalized return to the Central City and charts a path forward knowing that the road ahead has many challenges. Chicago is already in a leading position for COVID recovery thanks to the RTF and important collaboration between sectors. This roadmap is a continuation of that recovery collaboration across sectors and frames how we can ensure that there is a focus on the Central City, the beating heart of the regional economy. By working together, Chicagoans will rise to this challenge just as its citizens have done in the past. This fall marks 150 years since the Great Chicago Fire and 2022 will be a rebuilding year just as it was 150 years ago during the largest urban rebuilding in America's history.

"Our inequities as a city are rooted in race, class, and gender, and thus our recovery must face this reality, and make investments to address and not shy away from these realities"

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, 2021 Mayoral Address.





APPENDIX ■ A.I: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

This matrix identifies 90 actions from each of the four subcommittees. Some of these actions have been enacted already and some are still in the planning stages with more details to be announced in the future.

Agency	Abbreviation
Building Operators and Managers Association of Chicago	BOMA
City of Chicago - Business Affairs and Consumer Protection	BACP
City of Chicago - Chicago Police Department	CPD
City of Chicago - Department of Buildings	DOB
City of Chicago - Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events	DCASE
City of Chicago - Department of Housing	DOH
City of Chicago - Department of Planning and Development	DPD
City of Chicago - Department of Public Health	CDPH
City of Chicago - Department of Transportation	CDOT
City of Chicago - Mayor's Office	MO
City of Chicago - Office of Emergency Management & Communication	OEMC
Chicago Central Area Committee	CCAC
Chicago Housing Authority	CHA
Chicago Public Schools	CPS
Chicago Transit Authority	CTA
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce	CC
Chicago Loop Alliance	CLA
Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago	CCC
Corporate Coalition	CORP
Special Service Area	SSA
State of Illinois - Governor's Office	GO
Magnificent Mile Association	MMA
Metropolitan Pier and Expansion Authority	MPEA
Urban Land Institute	ULI
World Business Chicago	WBC

Business and Commerce														
				Schedule								Lead Entity		Supporting Partners
Recommendations				P = Plan				I = Implement						
				Near Term (2021)				Mid Term						
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	22	23	24				
1	PREPARE FOR A SAFE AND STRONG WORKPLACE RETURN													
	1.1	Continue to promote public awareness about public health guidelines, safe use of transit, and downtown workplace return.										CDPH, MO, WBC, CTA/Metra	BOMA, CLA, MMA, Private Employers	
	1.2	Calibrate workplace return expectations to vaccination rates and to the return of elementary and high school students.										CDPH, CPS, MO	WBC	
	1.3	Coordinate and promote the reopening of cultural venues and other amenities to attract employees back to their workplaces.										DCASE, BACP, CDPH, MO	WBC, BOMA, CLA, Private Employers	
	1.4	Continue to implement Five Pillars of public safety response, monitor crime metrics, and improve information sharing between CPD, property owners, and businesses.										CPD	Business and Property Owners	
	1.5	Promote a culture of office-based work and added value of employer centered workplaces including productivity, collaboration, communication, mentorship and training.										Private employers	WBC	
	1.6	Encourage employers to support small and independent retail cafes and restaurants with coffee and lunch gift cards for the re-opening period.										WBC, MO, CCC, DPD, CLA, MMA	CCAC	
	1.7	Property owners and tenants should encourage their employees to get vaccinated and can assess their office environments for potential improvements.										Property owners and tenants	BOMA	
	1.8	Study how to improve regulatory/permit processes specifically targeting ground floor uses and adaptive reuses.										BACP, DOB, DPD, MO		
2	FOCUS ON KEY COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS													
	2.1	Conduct corridor specific planning to address changing markets with particular focus on LaSalle Street, Michigan Avenue, and State Street.										DPD, MMA, CLA, ULI	Building owners	
	2.2	Identify potential uses for large, recently vacated flagship retail spaces on North Michigan Avenue and State Street.										Building owners, DPD, MMA, CLA, ULI		
	2.3	Continue to encourage the reactivation of vacant ground floor retails spaces with other appropriate uses such as amenity space for the residents in the building (fitness room, etc.).										Developers, building owners	DPD	
	2.4	Engage leading real estate brokers to identify uses that will continue to favor an urban location, focusing on older Class B+C office and retail spaces.										DPD, MMA, CLA	BOMA, CCAC	
	2.5	Explore providing better funding mechanisms and incentives such as the feasibility of BIDs.										DPD	CLA, MMA	



APPENDIX ■ A.I: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Business and Commerce											
				Schedule							
Recommendations				P = Plan				I = Implement			
Goals and Actions				Near Term (2021)				Mid Term			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	22	23	24	
3 LINK NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS TO CENTRAL CITY JOBS											
3.1	Support intermediary organizations focused on linking neighborhood residents to job opportunities and employers, anticipating ramped up hiring during the reopening and recovery of the the Central City.										Cook County Workforce Partnership, Skills for Chicagoland's Future, P33, Hire 360, Civic Committee
3.2	Encourage employer review of job descriptions to reflect contemporary job requirements while removing unnecessary screening and barriers that can exclude qualified neighborhood residents.										Cook County Workforce Partnership, Skills for Chicagoland's Future, P33, and Hire 360, Civic Committee
3.3	Expand sources of Central City employer recruitment beyond established sources – include Chicago City Colleges and all local universities.										Major Private Employers
3.3	Expand the Chicago Apprentice Network to help more businesses establish successful apprentice programs and to build the capacity of job applicants and recruits: providing high school graduates the opportunity to gain experience in corporate functions such as account management, client support, financial analysis, human resources, and IT.										Major Private Employers
3.4	Create internal support systems to secure higher rates of employee retention.										Major Private Employers
3.5	Expand the Corporate Coalition Chicago Resiliency Network: addressing the challenges faced by employees and recruits from the South and West Sides of Chicago in overcoming trauma and providing healing-centered practices to increase comfort in asking for help, support employees in the workplace and achieve greater employee retention and productivity.										Corporate Coalition (CORP)
3.6	Promote and encourage business diversity.										Government agencies, Major Private Businesses
4 ATTRACT NEW BUSINESSES AND EMPLOYEES											
4.1	Promote Central City competitive assets to enhance business attraction nationally and globally										WBC
4.2	Focus business attraction on high growth business sectors: Healthcare, life sciences, food industry, agribusiness, technology, quantum-computing, cannabis industry, film and TV, and the green economy.										WBC
4.3	Continue to grow existing global strength in banking and professional services: accounting, law, management, marketing, advertising and architecture.										WBC
4.4	Prepare the region to capture HQ2s and corporate development and specialty centers.										WBC
4.5	Targeting student populations, people born in Chicago/Midwest to return to their roots, teleworkers/remote workers relocating from higher cost coastal cities.										WBC
4.6	Bring in local organizations to help relocated workers to forge community and civic connections.										WBC
4.7	Connect venture capital to Chicago's growing small and mid-size tech companies that will drive jobs growth in the next few years.										P33
4.8	Attract national retailers that are seeking new opportunities to the Central City and neighborhoods.										WBC
4.9	Advance large redevelopment projects.										DPD, Property owners
5 CONTINUE PLANNING FOR POLICY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENTS											
5.1	Support investment in transit services, infrastructure and technology to enhance connectivity, efficiency and safety across bus, rapid transit, rail systems, and the waterways.										CTA/Metra, CDOT, MO
5.2	Study opportunities for enhanced connections from Central City to O'Hare Airport for business travelers and airport employees.										CTA/Metra, CDOT, MO
5.3	Address livability as an economic driver: the need for more resident assets, neighborhood amenities and a mix of housing for different household types and at affordability levels.										DPD, DOH
5.4	Update the Central Area Plan to set vision and recommendations related to land uses, density, public realm improvements, services and amenities for residents, workers, and visitors.										DPD
5.5	Continue engagement and planning as part of <i>We Will</i> citywide plan.										DPD, MO
5.6	Utilize data and involve key stakeholders to make informed infrastructure, transit, and public realm improvement spending choices.										GO, MO, CDOT, CTA/Metra, DPD, Park District



APPENDIX ■ A.I: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Culture and Tourism

RECOMMENDATIONS			Schedule								Lead Entity	Supporting Partners
			P = Plan				I = Implement					
			Near Term (2021)				Mid Term					
Goals and Actions			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	22	23	24			
1	CONVENE AND SUPPORT ARTS/CULTURE/TOURISM SECTORS FOR REOPENING AND RECOVERY											
	1.1	Establish clear reopening guidelines for special events and cultural venues that can be used to begin planning for programs.								MO	CDPH; DCASE	
	1.2	Encourage participation in <i>Chicago Presents</i> , a new funding initiative to help independent, cultural producers deliver safe programs this summer.								MO	DCASE, CDOT, DPD	
	1.3	Launch and promote Chicago Band Roster to restaurants, businesses, venues, independent producers and promoters.								DCASE		
	1.4	Advocate in support of the arts sector and assemble an array of programs and resources that support arts recovery.								DCASE	MO	
2	LEVERAGE CENTRAL AREA ASSETS TO ATTRACT LEISURE TOURISM											
	2.1	Convene Central Area stakeholders to coordinate actions, plan and implement special events.								CLA/MMA	DPD/DCASE	
	2.2	Utilize Chicago brand ambassadors to promote leisure tourism with particular focus on the Midwest.								CHOOSE	WBC; DCASE	
	2.3	Encourage street activations that include arts and cultural offerings.								Chambers, Property Owners, DCASE	CDOT, DPD	
	2.4	Align programming with the Year of Chicago Music and <i>Chicago In Tune</i> .								DCASE		
	2.5	Produce lo-fi and pop-up programming at key cultural destinations, such as Millennium Park and The Chicago Riverwalk.								DCASE	Cultural Partners	
	2.6	Host reduced-capacity concerts in Millennium Park with performances by Grant Park Music Festival, events produced by DCASE and cultural partners.								DCASE	Cultural Partners	
3	DRIVE VISITATION INTO NEIGHBORHOODS FOR ARTS PROGRAMING											
	3.1	Link Central Area attraction strategies with programs and events in neighborhood business corridors, parks and places.								MO or DPD	CHOOSE, CDOT, CPD	
	3.2	Bring additional cultural resources to support neighborhood development, particularly in INVEST South/West areas.								MO	DPD, DCASE	
	3.3	Encourage SSAs and community groups to provide leadership within their communities as they leverage local cultural assets to drive recovery.								DPD	DCASE	
	3.4	Use arts to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion and to help heal racial and socioeconomic divides.								DCASE	DPD, CDOT, CTA	
4	IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE CITYWIDE APPROACH FOR CULTURAL INITIATIVES											
	4.1	Develop rich story-telling and joint marketing campaigns that attract visitors and residents.								CHOOSE	DCASE	
	4.2	Partner with <i>Choose Chicago</i> to market and promote Chicago's cultural offerings.								CHOOSE	DCASE	
5	ADVOCATE FOR THE ARTS AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES											
	5.1	Position arts and culture for reopening success through coordinated advocacy.								DCASE		
	5.2	Advocate for recovery resources for arts and culture activities (i.e. The American Rescue Plan).								MO	DCASE	
	5.3	Increase equity and access to programs and deepen investment in our neighborhoods.								MO	DCASE, DPD, CPD, CDOT, CTA	
	5.4	Advocate for Chicago's creative community and help promote and elevate collective work to hire artists, increase audience and add visibility to the sector.								DCASE	Cultural Partners	
	5.5	Utilize city resources like the Chicago Band Roster and the Public Art Prequalified List to hire local and put artists back to work.								DCASE	Cultural Partners	



APPENDIX ■ A.I- IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Residents & Community									
Recommendations		Schedule							
		P = Plan				I = Implement			
		Near Term (2021)				Mid Term (2022-2024)			
Goals and Actions		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	22	23	24	
1 ADDRESS SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE CENTRAL CITY									
1.1	Continue to implement the 5 Pillars of Safety through community collaboration.								CPD, MO
1.2	Invite CPD officers to speak with community groups on a regular basis about the status of various initiatives happening in their neighborhood to heighten transparency, trust and understanding.								CPD, Neighborhood groups
1.3	Continue to track where crime is most prevalent and target police resources in those areas.								CPD, MO
1.4	Organize community clean up days for streets and parks to bring back the perception of cleanliness, elegance and safety.								Neighborhood groups, MMA, CLA
1.5	Continue to communicate public safety actions to residents, property owners, and workers in the Central City in advance of large protests and/or potential looting activity.								MO, OEMC, CPD
2 ACTIVATE STOREFRONTS, STREETS, AND PARKS									
2.1	Collaboration between neighborhood groups, chambers, and property owners to build a database of storefront spaces to be activated and to identify desired uses for these storefronts.								Property owners, chambers, neighborhood groups
2.2	Provide incentives to activate storefronts with special focus on anchor storefronts that can bring traffic to support neighboring/secondary retail storefronts.								Chambers/SSAs, MO, BACP
2.3	Partner with local cultural and educational institutions and non-profit groups to provide installations in vacant storefronts.								Property owners, business chambers, neighborhood groups
2.4	Support temporary and pop-up uses to fill vacant storefront spaces.								Property owners, business chambers
2.5	Provide programming and amenities such as movies, markets, cultural and music events, festivals, and free wifi within parks, streets, and plazas to encourage residents to spend more time in public places.								DCASE, Park District, chambers, neighborhood groups
3 IMPROVE SERVICES AND AMENITIES TO RETAIN AND ATTRACT RESIDENTS IN THE CENTRAL CITY									
3.1	Provide more affordable housing options within the Central City so that more low- and moderate-income residents can afford to live near where they work.								DOH, CHA, DPD, developers
3.2	Partner with local institutions and universities to recruit new residents i.e. fresh graduates of downtown universities and workers of major institutions such as hospitals.								Neighborhood groups, universities, hospitals
3.3	Promote Chicago's Central City as a major medical hub with institutions such as Northwestern Medicine, Lurie Childrens, Rush Hospital, and others.								WBC





APPENDIX ■ A.I: IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Transportation & Mobility

Recommendations		Schedule							Lead Entity	Supporting Partners	
		P = Plan				I = Implement					
		Near Term (2021)				Mid Term					
Goals and Actions		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	22	23	24	Responsibility		
1	GROW TRANSIT RIDERSHIP										
1.1	Continue to communicate and promote the safety of public transportation, the enhanced cleaning measures already implemented, and the ongoing transit improvements that will provide an enhanced user experience.										
1.2	Continue to distribute free disposable masks on all CTA buses and rail stations.										
1.3	Identify 10-15 key office buildings to include screens with real time data in business lobbies or other high traffic areas near stations with highest ridership levels.										
1.4	Build on current summer promotional fare changes to identify more long-term reduced and new fare product options.										
1.5	Encourage employers to incentivize their employees to take sustainable transportation modes to work by subsidizing transit and biking use instead of auto-use, by promoting and matching to pre-tax transit benefits to employees, and reducing subsidies for parking and driving.										
1.6	Explore more multi-modal fare products such as joint bike rental and transit fares.										
1.7	Enhance transit transfers with better wayfinding at main transit points.										
1.8	Continue ongoing transit improvements: CTA - Red-Purple Modernization, Your New Blue, Red Line Extension, Electric bus deployment; Metra - planning and design for new and improved stations, signal improvements, new high-tech air and purification systems for 700 cars.										
1.9	Promote equitable Transit Oriented Developments near transit stations and high capacity bus routes.										
2	ATTRACT PEOPLE BACK TO THE CENTRAL CITY THROUGH STREET ACTIVATION										
2.1	Support existing and returning outdoor dining locations.										
2.2	Explore ways to expand street activation to include outdoor retail.										
2.3	Provide street activation support through financial grants (Chicago Alfresco) and assessing streamlining opportunities for street activation permits.										
2.4	Identify areas where special event street closures can be implemented, such as State Street and Michigan Avenue.										
2.5	Coordinate across sectors to ensure special event street closures incorporate cultural programming.										
3	FOSTER A CULTURE OF WALKING AND BICYCLING IN THE CENTRAL CITY										
3.1	Improve multi-modal connections including across pedestrian, bike, transit, and car modes.										
3.2	Increase physical traffic calming measures through bump-outs, bus bulbs, medians, and other traffic calming tools.										
3.3	Continue to upgrade and expand bike facilities in the Central City and connect them to the citywide bike network.										
3.4	Increase bicycle parking in the public right-of-way and in buildings.										
3.5	Enhance pedestrian and cycling wayfinding and communicate distances to key destinations.										
3.6	Increase marketing and awareness of Divvy bikeshare, micromobility, and other multi-modal initiatives.										





APPENDIX ■ A.II: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The following provides summaries of the great work and stakeholder feedback gathered by the four subcommittees in Business and Commerce, Culture and Tourism, Residents and Community, and Transportation and Mobility sectors. A chart of the final actions can be found for each in the Implementation Matrix.

1. ECONOMY / BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Central City Economic Challenge

Home to the historic Loop and the Central Business District, the economy of the Central City is Chicago's primary driver today. Business activity and this vital job-center provides income for households across the city and region, and has attracted its own residents to its shopping, culture, entertainment, public spaces and waterfronts.

The Central City saw economic expansion and transformation following the 2007-09 Great Recession, growing core sectors and attracting new knowledge economy, technology and life science companies. Districts evolved and the skyline grew, while historic buildings found creative new uses.

The COVID-19 pandemic and immediate recession dealt an immediate shock to economic activity in the Central City. Office workers became remote workers, and some businesses reduced their workforce. Many stores, restaurants, hotels, and theaters shuttered temporarily, and some affected by long-term consumer spending shifts and preferences have had to close permanently. The hotel sector saw an immediate drop in occupancy. Beverage, entertainment and performance venues were required to temporarily close their doors based on government and medical health guidelines. As a consequence, many of the businesses with fewer resources, less flexible formats, and tied to workday trade have suffered and has resulted in high unemployment rates throughout the pandemic.

Economic Goals

As the nation comes out of this recession, the Central City will need to act quickly in 2021 and prepare intentionally to achieve the strongest recovery. This will not be a simple return to previous conditions. The economy has shrunk overall, with GDP still recovering, work and retail habits have changed, business travel has been disrupted. Key economic goals include:

- *Achieving a safe and coordinated reopening in 2021*
- *Securing a quick rate of job recovery and growth.*
- *Ensuring Chicago's Central City remains competitive as a business location*
- *Advancing equity within Chicago by connecting central growth to job and business opportunities for residents across the city.*

Connecting the Central City and Neighborhoods Economically

- *There are multiple areas where there is a shared economic opportunity for the Central City and neighborhoods. This includes:*
- *Encouraging neighborhood residents are hired to fill vacant positions in the restaurant, entertainment, performance and hotel sectors that have been so obviously impacted by public-health driven shut-down requirements.*
- *Supporting targeted services that link new Central City job opportunities in corporate, tech and construction sectors to neighborhood residents.*
- *Encouraging update of outreach, recruitment, apprentice and retention processes to create stronger long-term employment relationships with neighborhood residents.*
- *Expanding business to business procurement for professional services as well as commodified services such as building, printing and food services.*

Connecting Business Growth with Other Work Streams

The recovery of core business and employment activity requires success in other sectors, specifically in transportation and mobility, culture and tourism, and resident and community domains addressed in this report. This includes:

- *Building back a return to transit for commuting and access to shopping, dining, entertainment, cultural and recreational activities.*
- *A 2021 reopening program for culture, performance and entertainment to re-engage people with the richness of Central City life that adds value to their work and business experience.*
- *Reviving retail and dining, particularly the small and independent sector, providing an amenity of residents, visitors and workers alike.*
- *Creative activation of streets and public spaces, offering a new way to experience the Central City.*
- *Investing in the next generation of mobility within the Central City, connecting residents to services and jobs across a more than seven-square mile area.*



APPENDIX ■ A.II: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Strategies Discussed

1. Prepare for a safe reopening through a business and public information campaign.

- Continue to establish clear messaging on phased workplace opening based on public health guidance.
- Communicate how a safe front door to workplace and other destinations can be achieved.
- Promote a culture of office-based work using national and international research on employer led workplace focused strategies.
- Set clear messages for the wider reopening and recovery process, addressing events, culture, tourism, retailing and education to entice workers back to the Central City.
- Continue to implement the Chicago Police Department's Five Pillars of a public safety response.
- Highlight the importance of the Central City as the greatest concentration of jobs in the region.

2. Expand workplace reopening and promote an in-person office culture

- Assess office environments for potential modifications to interior layouts and building systems.
- Help building owners and tenants access federal funding resources for building upgrades and operational needs.
- Promote the benefits of in-person working – inter-personal communication, collaboration, mentoring, innovation, sustaining business cultures.

3. Ensure other Sectors are Aligned with, and support Office Reopening

- Revitalize central area restaurants and retail stores to ensure employees have places to eat and shop as they return to the office.
- Organize financial support to provide working capital for cash-short but viable small and independent businesses from across the private banking, CDFI and non-profit economic development agency sources.
- Achieve a phased hotel reopening with a regional leisure tourism focus on people who can drive to Chicago within five hours.
- Provide a 2021 performance and cultural program.

3. Encourage flexible, temporary and adaptive uses

- Support temporary ground-floor uses and activities with funding and by pairing citywide neighborhood groups and artists with property managers.
- Allow retail uses such as supermarkets and shops to expand onto the sidewalks and for special event street closures.
- Streamline permitting for building adaptations to respond to increased demand for processes for public health resilience measures by building owners and managers.
- Encourage and support adaptive reuse of underutilized office and hotel buildings with other uses, targeting growing sectors.

4. Maximize local and minority hiring from all Chicago neighborhoods to share job gains.

- Link neighborhood residents to job opportunities across all Central City sectors as they rapidly rebuild their workforces, setting new practices for the future.
- Refresh hiring and retention processes to share job opportunities with a wider population.

5. Strengthen business to business purchasing connections between Central City corporates and institutions and MBE / WBEs

- Extend MBE and WBE contract participation beyond the government sector, linking small and neighborhood businesses to corporate contracting opportunities to support business growth.

6. Support business retention and attraction

- Promote the Central City's primary assets including: workforce talent and scale, access to higher education, our open and helping culture, iconic institutions and public space destinations, global transportation connections and local transit, digital capacity and connectivity, utilities and water.
- Focus on strong and growing sectors such as the entertainment industry, healthcare, food and agriculture, tech, tv and film, life sciences, cannabis, quantum-computing, and the green economy.
- Continue to grow existing global strength in banking and professional services: accounting, law, management, marketing, advertising and architecture.
- Create partnerships between World Business Chicago and commercial corridor chambers and associations.
- Create a welcome committee made up of business leaders to act as a welcoming committee and support business attraction efforts.



APPENDIX ■ A.II: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- *Attract relocating and next generation workers by providing an exciting and affordable work, live, and play environment.*
- *Strengthen regional venture capital capacity for small and mid-size tech businesses.*
- *Focus short-term planning efforts to support important commercial corridors such as Michigan Avenue, LaSalle Street and State/Wabash Streets so that they are able to keep existing retail and attract new uses.*
- *Explore funding mechanisms, such as Business Improvement Districts, for area based economic development in the Central City.*
- *Advocate that reassessment by the Cook County Assessor should recognize the impact of the pandemic and recession on commercial and residential real estate values.*

7. Strengthen City business services in anticipation of high demand

- *Put resources in place to respond to a high demand for permit review and business inspections before reopening.*
- *Ensure a customer service mindset across permitting departments to support business reopening.*

8. Set clear future directions for the Central City.

- *Complete We Will, the three-year citywide plan, and update the 2003 Central Area Plan, with a focus on new challenges for the 2020, the international competitiveness of Chicago's Central City and opportunities to grow and connect the Central City to the neighborhoods.*
- *Encourage and support the implementation of major development projects in the Central City, many of which are already approved but still need to secure anchor tenants.*
- *Address the fiscal context, using performance criteria to make infrastructure spending choices and addressing structural issues around public sector pensions and other liabilities, a known factor constraining business relocations to the state and city.*

2. CULTURE AND TOURISM**The Challenge – Reviving the Heart and Soul of Our City**

Chicago's cultural landscape is as rich and varied as any great city of the world. It is a window into the heart and soul of Chicagoans and a genuine source of civic pride. It is also an economic engine that drives leisure and business tourism and a generator of foot traffic and spending that benefits local businesses across the city. In a world emerging from unprecedented restrictions, people are yearning for cultural reengagement now.

In pre-pandemic 2019, Chicago's cultural landscape was alive and thriving - it was truly the heart and soul of the life of our city. Film production was booming; we were seen as a world-class music, theater, and dance capital; our museums beckoned; and our visual artists and public art were reshaping our neighborhoods. Drawing upon this, Chicago's tourism sector attracted 57.7 million visitors and generated \$16 billion in tourist expenditure, while contributing \$1.1 billion in tourism tax revenue and supporting 150,000 jobs. This demonstrates the essential role of culture in the social and economic vitality of the city.

Culture and Tourism Goals

In order to position Chicago's cultural vitality as a driving force in its economic recovery, the following goals have been identified for the cultural sectors as the basis for the strategies and actions detailed in this recovery roadmap.

- 1. Activate public spaces and streets through new and expanded initiatives that promote public life and economic activity throughout the city.**
- 2. Link Central Area attraction strategies with programs and events in neighborhood business corridors, parks, and places.**
- 3. Provide resources and guidelines for cultural producers to deliver safe and engaging programs this summer, both downtown and in the neighborhoods.**
- 4. Advocate on behalf of cultural institutions and support the return of arts and culture events, programs, and productions.**
- 5. Position Year of Chicago Music's (YOCM) Chicago In Tune as the comeback event for the City and provide ongoing opportunities for coordinated citywide cultural celebrations.**

Tragically, the impact of COVID-19 on the arts, culture and tourism sectors in Chicago has been devastating. These sectors were among the first to close and remain challenged to reopen. This has resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs and remains the biggest threat to the cultural landscape of Chicago in the city's history. Action must be taken to ensure the survival of the artists, institutions and events that are vital to Chicago and the workforce dependent upon them.

Connecting Central City and Neighborhood Culture and Tourism

We need to break down the either/or between the Central Area and the neighborhoods and find ways to bring synergy between them. We also recognize that in this deeply segregated city, the arts can be a powerful tool to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.



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**Connecting with other Work Streams – the Leading Role of Culture**

A common theme that emerged across the four subcommittees is that culture has a unique role to play in returning social and economic vitality to Chicago. The benefits of prioritizing cultural activation include confidence building that the world is emerging from a time of crisis to one where it is safer to return to work, shops, schools and play, increased public safety as a result of more people being back on the streets, and economic benefits from increased foot traffic and consumer spending.

Leisure tourism is anticipated to be an economic sector poised for significant near-term and sustained growth. But visitors need something to do. Chicago's cultural landscape should be funded and leveraged to return vibrancy to the city, support the comeback of artists and cultural institutions, and attract visitors from the Midwest and afar.

However, reactivation of cultural sectors is not as simple as turning on a switch. Clearly articulated strategies, priorities and pathways for organizations and individuals to contribute in collaborative and coordinated ways are needed now to provide the basis upon which they are able to plan and deliver.

Strategies Discussed**1. Convene and support arts/culture/tourism sectors for reopening and recovery**

- *In partnership with Chicago Department of Public Health, establish clear reopening guidelines for special events and cultural venues that can be used to plan programs.*
- *Convene the arts and culture sector to present recovery initiatives to bring synergy to planning efforts.*

- *Develop a joint calendar of events that showcases art and culture offerings in Chicago neighborhoods throughout the summer.*
- *Encourage participation in Chicago Presents, a new funding initiative to help independent, cultural producers deliver safe, socially distant programs this summer.*
- *Launch the Chicago Band Roster, a curated list of local musicians and bands to be promoted to restaurants, businesses, venues, independent producers, and promoters that have been impacted by COVID.*

2. Leverage central area assets to attract leisure tourism

- *Convene Central Area stakeholders to coordinate actions, plan and implement special events.*
- *Utilize Chicago brand ambassadors to promote leisure tourism with particular focus on the Midwest.*
- *Encourage street activations that include arts and cultural offerings.*
- *Align programming with the Year of Chicago Music and Chicago In Tune.*
- *Produce lo-fi and pop-up programming at key cultural destinations, such as Millennium Park and The Chicago Riverwalk.*
- *Host up to 40 reduced-capacity concerts in Millennium Park with performances by Grant Park Music Festival, events produced by DCASE and programs from cultural partners.*



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3. Drive visitation into neighborhoods for arts programing

- *Link Central Area attraction strategies with programs and events in neighborhood business corridors, parks and places.*
- *Bring additional cultural resources to support neighborhood development, particularly in INVEST South/West areas.*
- *Encourage SSAs and community groups to provide leadership within their communities as they leverage local cultural assets to drive recovery.*
- *Break down the either/or between the Central Area and the neighborhoods by using arts to address issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion and help heal racial and socioeconomic divides.*

4. Implement umbrella approach to citywide initiatives

- *Position Year of Chicago Music's (YOCM) Chicago In Tune as the comeback event for the City and provide ongoing opportunities for coordinated citywide cultural celebrations.*
- *Launch and grow broad participation in two fall/winter citywide cultural events:*
- *Conjuring Chicago's Creative Spirit – October*
- *Holiday Joy – November/December*
- *Develop rich story-telling and joint marketing campaigns to attract visitors and residents, while avoiding one-off and disconnected events.*
- *Partner with Choose Chicago to market and promote Chicago's cultural offerings.*

5. Advocate for the arts and cultural industries

- *Position arts and culture for reopening success through coordinated advocacy.*
- *Support Choose Chicago marketing of the arts.*
- *Advocate for recovery resources for arts and culture activities (i.e. The American Rescue Plan).*
- *Increase equity and access to programs and deepen investment in our neighborhoods.*
- *Stay informed of upcoming opportunities for artists and organizations and help spread the word throughout the arts and culture community.*
- *Advocate for Chicago's creative community and help promote and elevate collective work to hire artists, increase audience and add visibility to the sector.*
- *Utilize city resources like the Chicago Band Roster and the Public Art Prequalified List to hire local and put artists back to work.*

3. RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY**The Challenge – Promoting Livability in the Central City**

The City of Chicago is a remarkable place to live, work and play, but in recent history the perception of living in the Central Area has been less than stellar. Between concerns about public safety, lack of preferred K-12 education options and the deactivation of once vibrant places, the allure that Central City living once had appears to have dimmed. As the Residents and Community subcommittee grappled with these issues, we sought ways to help people rediscover Chicago and see its immense potential through a new lens, particularly the areas downtown that have been negatively impacted by the dynamics of COVID-19. Our key challenge is to return the Central City to a top residential destination for citizens representing all generations and stations in life. To become and remain an attractive place to live, the Central City will need to address its greatest challenges head on with support from the rich network of community organizations that focus on improving Chicago's livability.

Residents and Community Goals

Through the various Residents and Community subcommittee meetings, a common theme emerged as an area of focus for the attraction and retention of residents: an improved quality of life. The following goals are geared towards addressing the issues that have been identified as potentially compromising of livability for Chicago's Central City residents.

1. Address safety in the Central City.**2. Activate downtown storefronts and the public realm for residents.****3. Improve resident services and amenities, specifically relating to educational, housing, and open space opportunities.****4. Attract new residents to the Central Area through targeted marketing and incentive programs and policies.**



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Connecting Central City and Neighborhood Residents and Communities

While the Chicago's Central Area can be considered the heart of the city, our neighborhoods feel like Chicago's soul. When both are operating in concert with each other, the entire city is more vibrant, safe, prosperous and attractive. A negative by-product of COVID-19 has been the heightened disconnect between the Central Area and the surrounding Chicago neighborhoods. With decreased activity downtown, the energy that was once felt from daily commuters and tourists alike is noticeably absent. The reduction in CTA ridership as a result of the pandemic has limited connection between neighborhoods and the Central Area. As we emerge from the grips of COVID-19, it is evident how vital a truly inter-connected Chicago can and should be. Not only will more traffic downtown increase the appeal of living downtown, but it will have economic and safety impacts as well. Connection throughout Chicago is key to improving the quality of life for residents in each neighborhood. A connected Chicago is a better Chicago.

Connecting Livability with other Work Streams

The livability of Chicago's Central City has a direct impact on the economic strength of our city, it influences the appeal of downtown as a destination, and it drives the connections between Chicago's various neighborhoods. The livability of downtown is an indicator of the overall vitality of the city and thus the other work streams of the Forward Together Initiative are key to a successful post-COVID recovery. Selling the "walk to work" concept might be compelling for some, but more broadly, there should be an emphasis on the benefits of being in the center of it all. With a focus on inter-generational benefits, the potential of Central Area living as a safe and convenient place to live is strong. Once the storefronts are activated and more programming is made available, the marketing of Downtown Chicago will be much less challenging. Working closely together, the city, various community organizations and business leaders can effectively re-position Chicago's Central City as a choice residential destination post-COVID.

Strategies Discussed**1. Address safety in the Central City**

- *It is important to establish a clear set of metrics as milestones to reduce crime rates in the Central City. Working closely with community organizations, CPD can set goals to spend more time and resources in the areas at highest risk for crime.*
- *Heightened programming can help address some of the public safety issues faced in the Central Area, particularly when multiple stakeholder groups provide input on how to best meet the needs of the community.*
- *Several resident leaders encourage CPD to provide more foot patrol, with police walking the streets, stopping in to say hello to businesses and residents along the way.*

- *Street clean-up and the removal of graffiti can help with the perception of safety, which also helps restore a sense of pride in the Central City.*

2. Activate downtown storefronts and the public realm for residents

- *The activation of vacant storefronts is vital to livability in the Central City. The city and business chambers should work closely with building owners, non-profit and community organizations and local companies to develop storefront activation plans.*
- *Create a database of neighborhood artists, artisans, restaurants and businesses to engage for pop-up shops downtown is another viable strategy to spur activation. A variety of incentives should be made available to activate storefronts, including temporary art installations.*
- *Potential partners for neighborhood activation include:*
 - Community groups, educational institutions, business chambers, and property owners can be partners to support and coordinate storefront and street activation.
 - DPD, CDOT, DCASE and the Chicago Park District can work with local organizations and owners to coordinate storefront and public realm activation.
- *Other ideas for activation include festivals, farmers markets, enhance existing parks, provide new open spaces, tactical urbanism installations, temporarily close streets for pedestrian use, family and youth-friendly events, provide a compiled events calendar, create a mailing list to ensure resident participation, leverage future developments as opportunities for new public space and community programming.*
- *Provide more resident-focused activities to help to improve their quality-of-life.*
- *Survey residents to better understand their interests and needs will help to ensure that activities are well-received.*
- *Assist community organizations with hosting resident programs is one way that the city can support improved outcomes for resident satisfaction. Increasing public amenities such as sidewalk café space and wifi are examples strategies.*



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3. Improve resident services and amenities, especially relating to educational, housing, and open space opportunities.

- *Improve educational opportunities within the Chicago Public Schools system for K-12 students while remaining a thriving area for college and graduate students.*
- *Provide more affordable housing options within the Central City so that more residents will have the opportunity to live closer to where they work.*
- *Support both public and private investments to include more open space areas geared for the enjoyment of local residents, such as public green and park spaces, dog parks, and children's play areas.*
- *Improve resident access to healthcare and personal services.*

4. Attract new residents to the Central City through targeted marketing and incentive programs

- *Develop a marketing campaign that promotes the Central City for all Chicagoans.*
- *Invite the public to rediscover Chicago post-COVID could be an effective method of inspiring movement downtown and the retention of existing Central City residents.*
- *To attract new residents, consider developing tailored incentive programs in conjunction with building owners, brokers and property managers.*
- *Target marketing to new graduates of local colleges and universities would likely yield positive outcomes.*
- *Other institutional anchors such as hospitals or museums are solid targets for resident recruitment efforts, as are large corporate entities with a downtown location.*





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4. TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

The Transportation and Mobility Challenge

The global COVID-19 pandemic has led to major changes in Chicago's transportation and mobility landscape, including dramatically reduced ridership on trains and buses, increased demand for cycling infrastructure and amenities, and an accelerated need for curb space for restaurants, retail, and commercial land uses.

Transportation and Mobility Goals

As the distribution of vaccines increases and employees and visitors return to Chicago's Central City, sustainable transportation will play a critical role in creating a safe, comfortable, and engaging experience for all users. Streets and the public right of way can activate key corridors. Transit partnerships and safety initiatives can enhance the user experience. Communication and wayfinding programs can increase pedestrian and cycling comfort levels. A car-forward recovery from the pandemic will be detrimental to our climate, economic, and public health goals.

Connecting Central City and Neighborhoods with the Transit and Street Network

Our streets and transit network connect visitors, residents, and workers to the Central City and our neighborhoods, suburbs, and greater region. Strengthening these connections through enhancements to amenities, infrastructure, and signage/wayfinding will provide predictable and reliable transportation options to all users.

Strategies Discussed

1. Build back ridership levels through enhanced communication, payment options, and overall transit experience

- *Leverage partnerships and stewardship to increase user confidence*
- *Consistently communicate the safety of public transportation*
- *Establish programs in which corporate staff model and encourage transit use to employees. Target 5 - 10 companies currently using pre-tax benefits to participate.*
- *Use fare media to increase awareness of transit frequency.*
- *Identify 15 key office buildings to include screens with real time data in business lobbies or other high traffic areas, target 15 buildings that are within a five- to ten-minute walk of stations with the highest ridership*

2. Monitor ridership data and communicate capacity data to users in real time

- *Provide payment options and discount programs to accommodate travel patterns and preferences*
- *Partner with restaurants, bars, or office buildings to provide transit users with a discount when using transit at their facility.*
- *Engage key medical and cultural institutions to provide transit pass, discount, or validation (instead of, or in addition to, parking validation)*



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3. Attract people downtown through strategic street activation

- Continue and/or expand pilot projects and learnings from implementation
- Work with business owners to measure success and changes in revenue due to street changes. Gather input regarding design improvements or preferences.
- Provide opportunities for the public to interact with and/or give feedback to street closures or interventions (voting, surveying, etc.).
- Work with other City departments to determine strategies to measure and track the impact of closures and/or interventions have on ADA users and parking revenue.

4. Implement street closures to provide more space and engagement opportunities

- Target high pedestrian area and important retail corridors such as State Street and Michigan Avenue
- Create parklets, placemaking, or other street activations adjacent to transit stations, parks, or cultural institutions

5. Provide more space for transit riders as they enter the City and/or make connections

- Potential locations: Clark & Lake, Union Station, Ogilvie, Millennium Station, State & Lake.
- Initiate street ambassadors' program to promote safety and comfort.
- Hire temporary staff at key street closure and/or activation locations to regulate safety measures. communicate initiatives, and guide users to key destinations.

6. Foster a culture of biking in the Central City

- Allow bikes on CTA and Metra trains for extended periods of times.
- Increase bike parking on street to accommodate increased ridership.
- Increase bike parking in office spaces.
- Target increased bike infrastructure along key corridors to improve connection.
- Enhance cycling wayfinding and communicate distances to key destinations.
- Increase marketing and awareness of e-bike expansion and other cycling and initiatives.

7. Foster a culture of walking in the Central City

- Reduce default speed limit citywide.
- Increase traffic calming and physical traffic calming measures through bump-outs, bus bulbs, medians, and other traffic calming tools. Target high-speed roadways-based speed data and crashes.
- Enhance pedestrian wayfinding and communicate distances to key destinations.

8. Manage vehicle trips and parking management

- Work with employers to provide transit subsidy or financial incentive equivalent the cost to lease or maintain parking to staff to use transit as opposed to driving.
- Unbundle parking from lease agreements and property ownership to communicate the real cost of parking.
- Promote travelers to take CTA to and from airports.

9. Brand and message strategically and consistently

- Invest in unified branding and messaging programs.
- Create and distribute welcome back map of where street closures, pilot programs, trains stations, etc. are located.
- Brand existing mobility hubs with reliable bikeshare and transit access throughout the Central City.
- Create consistent press release and language across City departments.
- Identify voices to lead messaging and marketing of these efforts.
- Identify potential steering committee members or key organizations to message this plan.
- Form "Friends of Transit" group to involve advocates for public transportation and identify potential members and partners.

APPENDIX ■ A.III: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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  **CHICAGO**