

# WE WILL CHICAGO

A framework plan  
for the city's future

PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2023

[wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)





*“ I believe engagement has to be organic. It has to come from the people. I believe it should reflect the generative themes of a community—the things that people are concerned about—but also be a celebration of culture, a sharing of culture. ”*

*— Marvin Garcia | Humboldt Park*



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## Dear Chicagoans,



**I'm pleased to present "We Will Chicago," Chicago's first citywide plan since 1966. We Will Chicago was created, reviewed and refined by thousands of Chicagoans through a community-driven, data-informed process that's centered on equity and resiliency.** The plan is a visionary, 10-year framework to advance neighborhood growth and vibrancy, and ensure that all residents can live in healthy, safe communities and feel a sense of belonging and ownership of their neighborhood and our beloved city.

We Will Chicago is our collective plan, not one crafted by City Hall alone. This plan reflects the insights of hundreds of residents, artists, community organizers, nonprofits, business and civic leaders and over 100 city and sister agency staff who collaborated for nearly three years to establish the plan's overall structure, goals and objectives to address the City's most fundamental needs. Support for this plan's vision is clear: Nearly 90% of over 10,000 Chicagoans who reviewed We Will in the summer of 2022 agreed with its goals and objectives.

As a 10-year planning framework, this document will be a critical tool to guide the city's future annual budgets, capital projects, and policy priorities to ensure public decision-making is focused on the needs of the entire City and all of its residents. Broader than a traditional land use or zoning plan, this framework aligns with national best practice to identify a comprehensive vision for our city – from transportation to arts and culture, housing to lifelong learning, and more. This plan also charts a path to promote health equity citywide and close the racial life expectancy gaps between neighborhoods.

To be able to reimagine our city's future, we must start by honestly reflecting on the past and present. That is why this document begins with our city's history of policies, programs, and investments that have caused and exacerbated racial and social inequality. Additionally, every section of the plan includes baseline data on social, health and economic inequities experienced by our residents. Over the next decade, we must monitor this data and publicly track our progress towards the plan's goals and objectives. Implementing this vision for a more equitable and resilient city will require tapping into the strength, creativity and passion of residents in all 77 communities, and deep collaboration with our network of community organizations, faith-based partners, businesses, and civic and philanthropic leaders.

Thankfully, we have already made great strides to realize the We Will Chicago vision. The City is advancing many of the plan's objectives every day through existing departmental strategic plans and initiatives, together with sister agencies and cross-sector partners. The We Will vision can be seen in our work to expand the city's public transit network to historically disinvested neighborhoods; prioritize City planning and development resources within underinvested South and West Side neighborhoods; better prepare preschoolers for kindergarten and high-schoolers for college; expand public resources for affordable housing citywide, especially near transit; address the health and wellness needs of Chicago's most vulnerable populations; and help fight climate change by equitably growing Chicago's tree canopy by 75,000 trees over the next five years, among other efforts.

On behalf of today's and tomorrow's Chicagoans, I want to thank the thousands of individuals who demonstrated their care and concern for our present and our future by contributing their perspectives and insights to the We Will plan. With We Will Chicago guiding our city and your partnership in implementation, I am more hopeful than ever about our equitable, inclusive and resilient future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori E. Lightfoot". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot**

# INTRODUCTION



**“We Will Chicago” is a set of goals and objectives to guide City priorities for the next 10 years.**

**Citywide plans are tools used by municipalities throughout the world to identify needs, establish goals and create strategies to achieve them.**

Chicago has utilized plans since the early 1900s to guide policies and decision-making that, for some residents and neighborhoods, has made it the nation’s most livable big city, with convenient access to high-quality jobs, housing, recreation, healthcare, schools, shopping, culture, and transportation. Others see and experience a different Chicago. A city in decline, with profound social, racial and economic challenges that have worsened over generations, especially on the South and West sides and for Black, Latino, Native American and other communities of color. We envision We Will as a tool to bridge the divide. We Will is the first citywide plan in Chicago’s history to acknowledge how many of the city’s most pressing needs are due

to systemic inequities that have been generations in the making. Some inequities are connected to previous actions and choices that had negative long-term consequences. Others are connected to what previous decisions and choices failed to acknowledge or effectively address on a citywide level. The We Will planning process started in summer of 2021 by research teams consisting of residents, community organizations and local leaders with wide-ranging backgrounds and life experiences that reflect the city’s unique urban environment and neighborhood fabric. Through group discussions, planning exercises, artistic interpretations and other innovative approaches, the research teams assessed citywide needs for eight quality of life “pillars,” and proposed a set of specific goals, objectives and policy ideas to address those needs.

**The pillars include:**

The teams' proposed goals and objectives were reviewed by the public in the summer and fall of 2022. Engagement efforts included virtual and in-person pop-up events in communities and meetings, live surveys, focus group discussions, online comment forms and more.

We Will's proposal to and adoption by the Chicago Plan Commission in early 2023 formalizes its purpose as a guide to promote equity and resilience in Chicago. The plan's ongoing implementation over the next decade will be a collective effort across City departments, sister agencies, community leaders, residents, civic organizations, business associations and the many other neighborhood stakeholders it is intended to support.

**KEY TERMS****Equity**

Both an outcome and a process that results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive.

**Resiliency**

The ability of individuals and groups to survive and adapt to personal stresses and collective change.



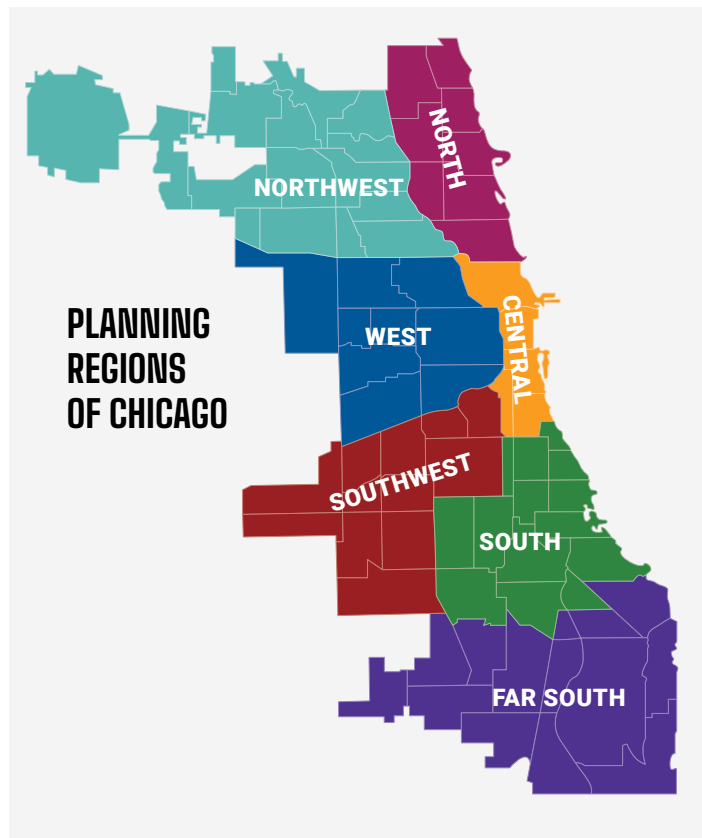
# ACKNOWLEDGING CHICAGO'S HISTORICAL INEQUITIES

**Historical acknowledgment is the first step of a reckoning process to repair harms perpetrated against specific groups and to prevent them from occurring again.**

**The city's evolution has directly and indirectly impacted generations of racial and ethnic communities, often in negative or burdensome ways and frequently for the benefit of privileged population groups. Harms to Chicagoans were both deliberate and unintentional, often involving the leadership, cooperation or silence of local, state and federal governments, as well as the private sector and other civic institutions.**

At the beginning of the We Will planning process, each pillar research team reviewed Chicago's history and relevant actions to assess impacts on historical and ongoing racial and ethnic inequities. The following are systemic harms that have occurred since the early 20th century. These historical snapshots represent lasting legacies of forces that We Will's vision for the future is seeking to address.

Though not intended to recount every instance of racial and social oppression in city history, these acknowledgments are included to contribute to a larger process of healing and reconciliation among Chicagoans and serve as an outline of some areas the City of Chicago commits to improving.



*Throughout this document, opinions expressed through direct quotations from the engagement process and reports cited do not represent the official view, policy or practice of the City of Chicago government.*



## Land Acknowledgment

**The City of Chicago is located on land that is and has long been a center for Native peoples.**

The area is the traditional homelands of the Anishinaabe, or the Council of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nations. Many other Nations consider this area their traditional homeland, including the Myaamia, Ho-Chunk, Menominee, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Kaskaskia, Wea, Kickapoo and Mascouten. The City specifically acknowledges the contributions of Kithiawa of the Potawatomi in fostering the community that has become Chicago.



**While as a vital urban center, Chicago's history in the post-World War II years saw some notable progress and achievements, there were some dark chapters that also shaped present day Chicago and exacerbated existing racial and economic divides that still resonate today. Some of the most significant policies and practices were:**

### **Federal Highway Construction**

**In the 1940s and '50s, the construction of U.S. Interstates 55, 57, 90, 94 and 290 harmed dozens of densely populated neighborhoods throughout Chicago.**

More than 6,000 families and 2,200 single people were displaced to make way for multilane roadways that divided many working-class communities and, in certain instances, separated white neighborhoods from Black ones, according to a 2020 Metropolitan Planning Council report. Highway construction also hastened the postwar exodus of primarily white families and white-owned businesses to the suburbs, along with jobs, cultural amenities, financial institutions, housing and other amenities that shrank local tax revenues and the City's ability to effectively address the needs of depopulated neighborhoods.

### **Treatment of Native Americans**

**The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 provided federal funding to relocate Native Americans to cities in part to address a huge demand for manufacturing labor during the economic boom following World War II.**

Advertising campaigns on reservations championed the benefits of urban life and government recruiters encouraged Native Americans living on reservations to relocate to cities like Chicago. The sales pitches did not acknowledge previous relocation policies that pushed Native Americans to marginal lands, nor how the relocation to cities was part of a broader effort to depopulate and terminate reservations, end federal obligations and erase Native American heritage, according to a 2019 University of Illinois-Chicago report.

### **Urban Renewal**

**In the 1950s and '60s, federally funded urban renewal projects incentivized the City's demolition of designated slums and blighted blocks with plans for modern multifamily homes, institutions and other large facilities.**

Urban renewal projects occurred throughout Chicago, but families and businesses in poor and Black neighborhoods were uprooted, deepening the city's racial and socioeconomic inequities. By 1966, more than 81,200 Chicagoans were displaced by construction projects intended for middle-class families and individuals, according to a 2018 University of Richmond study.

### **Loss of Public Housing**

**From the 1950s through the '60s, the City and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) constructed high-rise public housing projects for thousands of low-income Chicagoans and residents displaced by highway construction and urban renewal.**

Surrounded by paved plazas that were deliberately detached from the street grid, the buildings suffered from decades of deferred maintenance and obsolescence. When the City and CHA issued the "Plan for Transformation" in 2000 that was meant, in part, to address decades of racial segregation, CHA projects represented more than two thirds of the nation's 15 poorest census tracts. The plan demolished virtually all the former high-rises, displacing many Black residents. As of 2017, only 8% of the estimated 17,000 former residents of the demolished buildings were living in mixed-income communities, according to a Northwestern University and WBEZ study from the same year.

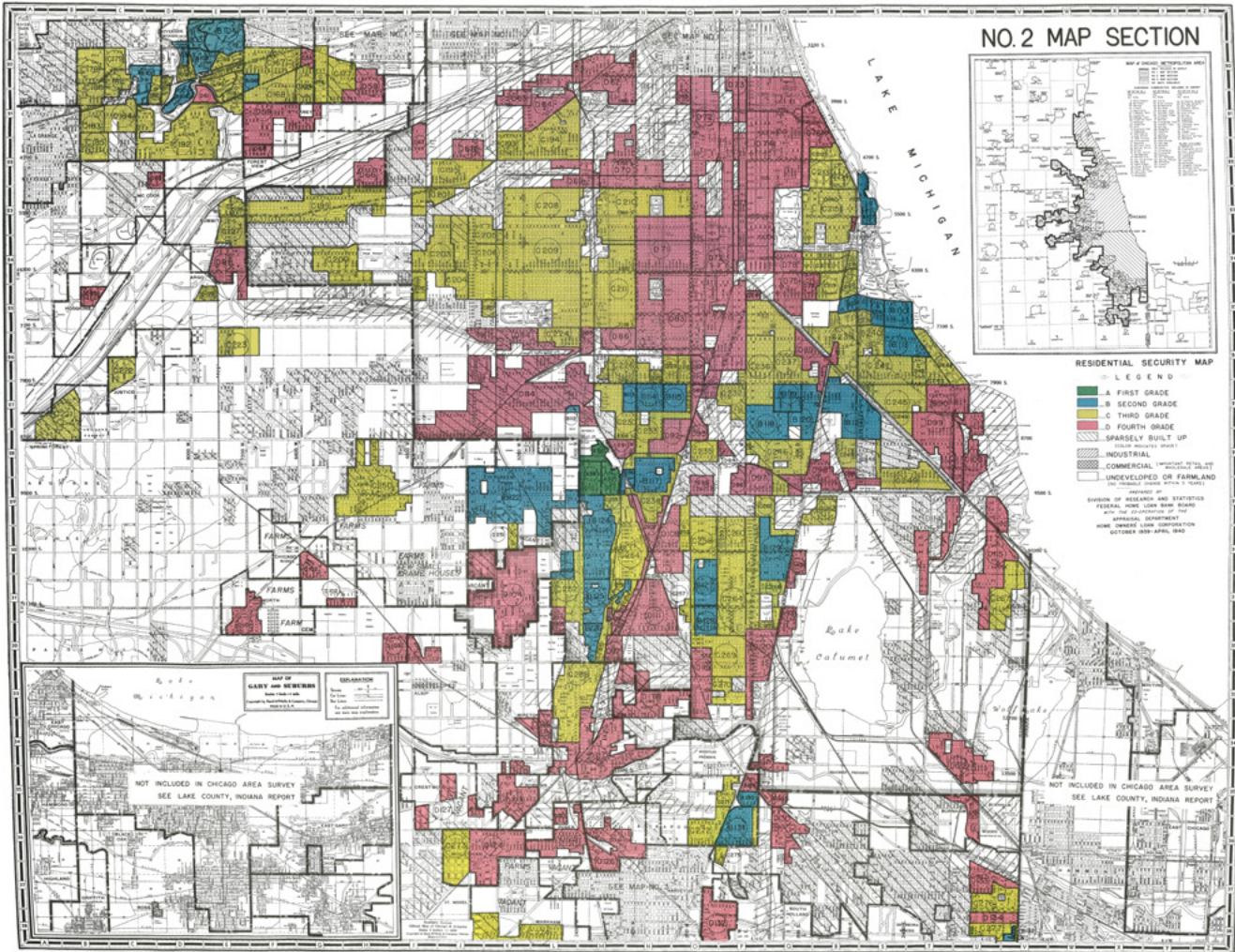
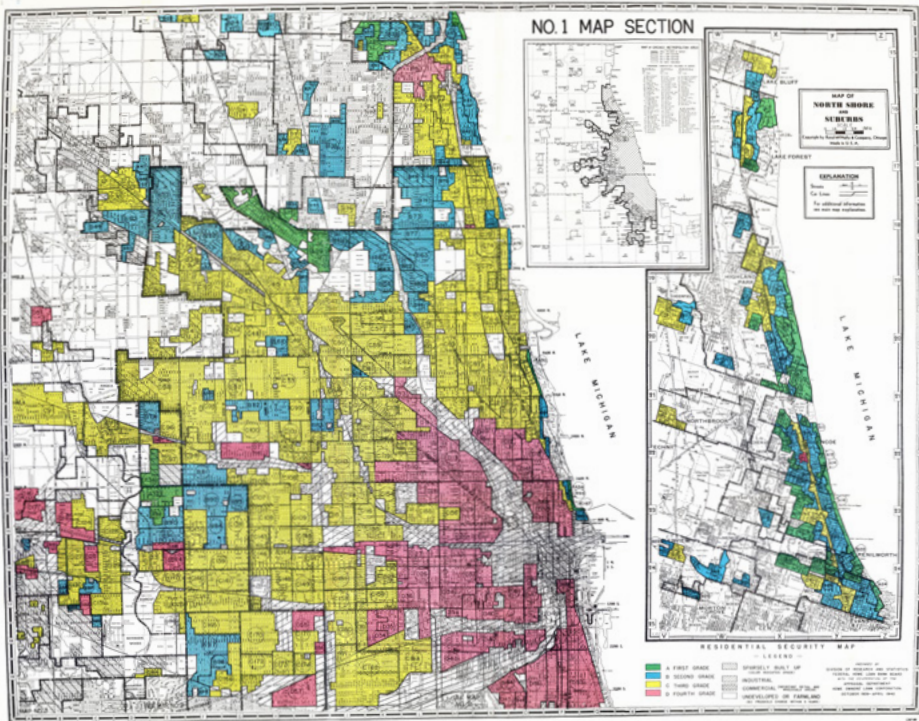
### **Redlining**

**Starting in the 1940s and continuing into the '70s, a coordinated effort by local and national financial organizations and other government and non-government entities prohibited the use of federally backed mortgage loans for home**

# HISTORY OF REDLINING IN CHICAGO

1940

- First Grade (considered "best")
- Second Grade
- Third Grade
- Fourth Grade (considered "hazardous")



### **purchases in select neighborhoods.**

Primarily comprised of Black people and low-income residents, these areas were often represented on maps in red to alert finance professionals that they were believed to represent risky investments for loans guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration. As a result, redlining directly incentivized banks not to approve loans for Black and some Latino applicants, resulting in Black households receiving less than 2% of all federally insured loans at the time, and predominantly white neighborhoods and suburbs receiving preferential access to financing, according to a 2014 DePaul University report.

## **Contract Sales**

**In the 1950s and '60s, predatory housing contracts robbed Black families in Chicago of an estimated \$3 billion to \$4 billion, according to a 2019 Duke University analysis.**

The wealth was extracted by real estate speculators, investment syndicates and other financial entities that sold properties to Black homebuyers through contracts instead of traditional mortgages. The contracts included large down payments and inflated interest rates that produced little or no equity over their terms. The contract sellers could also evict buyers at any time until payments were complete with minimal repercussions. Contract sales exploited an estimated nine of every 10 Black families who purchased homes in Chicago during the era, resulting in negligible family-wealth-building compared to families who enjoyed conventional mortgages.

## **Housing Covenants**

**As a result of the Great Migration of southern Black people to Chicago in the first half of the 20th century, some predominantly white neighborhoods on the North, South and West sides established restrictive covenants that legally prevented homeowners from selling or renting to Black people and, to a lesser extent, people of Jewish or Asian descent.**

Active from the 1910s to the '40s, these covenants

limited where Black families could settle, resulting in fewer housing choices, decreased mobility and limited job options. The covenants also increased opportunities for housing exploitation and discrimination in other neighborhoods through contract sales, redlining and other methods.

## **Blockbusting**

**With the dissolution of housing covenant enforcement by the 1950s, unscrupulous real estate companies and their sales agents leveraged white homeowners' fears about the potential impact of Black neighbors on their property values, sometimes convincing multiple adjacent households to expeditiously sell their homes and at reduced rates.**

The agents then sold the homes to Black buyers with inflated terms. The nationwide practice, thought to have started in Chicago, victimized both buyers and sellers to the detriment of dozens of neighborhoods across the West and South sides.

## **Great Recession**

**The 2008 foreclosure crisis was largely driven by global predatory lending practices that reduced the collective wealth of U.S. Black and Latino families by more than half and two-thirds, respectively.**

In Chicago, home prices in predominantly Black communities are still 24% below pre-recession levels, according to a 2011 Pew Research Center report.

## **Vacant Lots**

**The City's demolition of thousands of abandoned, vacant homes has left many West and South side neighborhoods pockmarked with overgrown lots.**

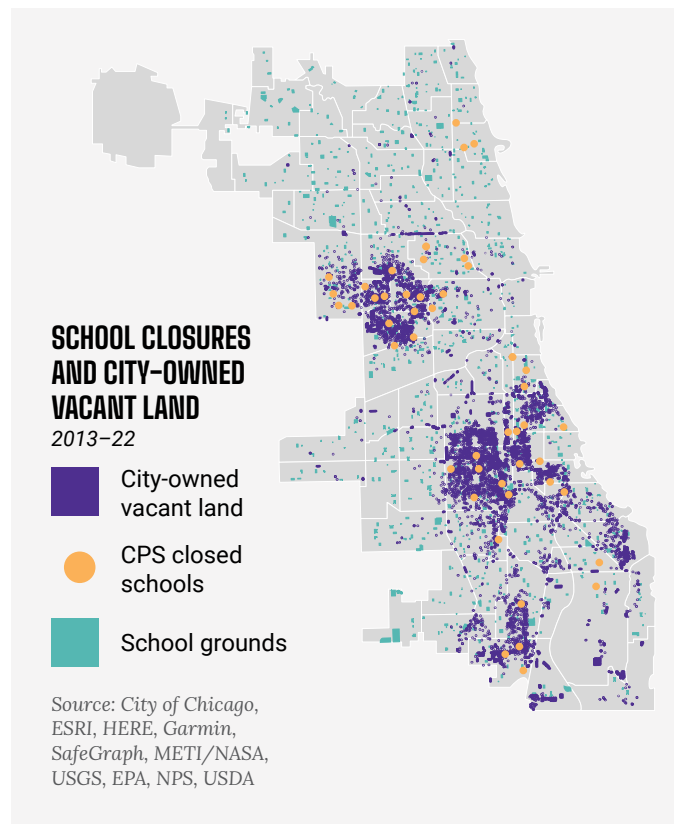
The lots continue to attract public dumping, loitering and other illegal activities that discourage private investment. As of early 2022, the City owned an estimated 10,000 vacant lots, with another 20,000 lots controlled by absentee property owners, banks, financial institutions and other entities with no comprehensive redevelopment strategy. Many vacant

lots, particularly on the West Side, are connected to the 1968 Chicago riots sparked in part by the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The riots resulted in more than 125 fires and 210 buildings being damaged, according to independent estimates.

## School Closures

**Following decades of neighborhood disinvestment and depopulation, the 2013 closure of 49 public elementary and high schools due to budget and enrollment issues left hundreds of West and South side families without convenient education options.**

Many students were forced to leave their neighborhoods to attend classes, sometimes through dangerous areas. A 2018 report by The Guardian estimated that 88% of students impacted by the closings were Black. Due to the absence of long-term planning for the security and repurposing of the closed schools as community assets, many buildings were stripped of valuable assets and 19 out of 50 of the buildings have yet to be repurposed to productive uses.



## Policing

**A pattern of racially inequitable policing in the United States and in Chicago is long-standing and well-established. The use of law enforcement to address violence as well as other social ill has led to deep mistrust of the police, allegations of abuse and corruption, and fundamentally has not led to lasting peace.**

A 2017 U.S. Department of Justice investigation of the Chicago Police Department (CPD) found “reasonable cause to believe that CPD has engaged in a pattern or practice of unreasonable force.” That investigation led to a lawsuit filed by the Illinois Attorney General against the City of Chicago in 2017. The Illinois Attorney General and the City reached a settlement resulting in a consent decree in 2019. The consent decree covers numerous topics including community policing, impartial policing, use of force, crisis intervention, supervision, training, officer wellness, data, and accountability. It is an agreement to make reforms to ensure that police services are provided to all individuals consistent with state and federal law and to build a foundation of trust between CPD and the communities they serve.

## Industrial Pollution

**Chicago's historic role as an industrial center and its location at the nexus of the country's transportation network have contributed to pollution-related burdens for generations of residents who work at or live near industrial facilities, rail yards, waterways, highways and airports.**

Late 20th century federal environmental regulations helped to mitigate air pollution, but the evolution of last-mile delivery facilities near area interstate highways in the 2010s, coupled with the continued environmental burden of the concentration of industrial facilities, continue to cause public health disparities for Chicagoans. Families living in majority Black and Latino

communities on the Southwest, West and Southeast sides that are near heavy industrial facilities and/or bisected by highways are more vulnerable to the effects of pollution exposure, according to a 2021 Alliance for the Great Lakes study, among other sources.

## Downtown Development

**The City has historically utilized public resources to pursue private and public developments in the central area, which has resulted in the displacement of communities, even as investments have made the area a successful commercial hub.**

In the late 19th century, the Loop included an established Chinatown, but the composition of the neighborhood changed as anti-Asian sentiment rose in the United States and the City forced the Asian American population to relocate to encourage continued development. Since the 1960s the City has sought to recreate the central area as a mixed-use neighborhood, often prioritizing resources to catalyze downtown developments at the expense of other neighborhoods. Guided by formal plans and policies, private sector investments incrementally expanded the footprint of downtown into the Near North, Near South and Near West sides, while public spending revitalized the Loop's cultural amenities and nearby public open spaces.

## Data and Exclusion

**Despite living in Chicago for decades or even before it was incorporated, multiple ethnic groups have been traditionally excluded from the city's historical narrative, undercounted during data collection efforts, and underrepresented as elected officials.**

Though most race-related data collection efforts in the U.S. have historically omitted Native American status, abundant research indicates that Native Americans experience significant disparities in health,

education and jobs. In another example of barriers to inclusion, Asian Americans didn't have a City Council representative until 2011 despite constituting approximately 7% of the City's population.

## Population Data in We Will

**Throughout this plan, many data charts and graphs include the available population-level data on economic and social outcomes by race and ethnicity as defined by categories in the U.S. Census.**

It was not until August of 2021 that the Census Bureau initiated questions to ask respondents their sexual orientation and gender identity. Some charts using third-party or non-census public sources do not include specific racial or ethnic groups, such as Native American residents, and not all charts in this plan display outcomes for other identities, such as disability, LGBTQIA, gender identity or status as undocumented.

# Addressing the Root Causes of Chicago's Health Inequities

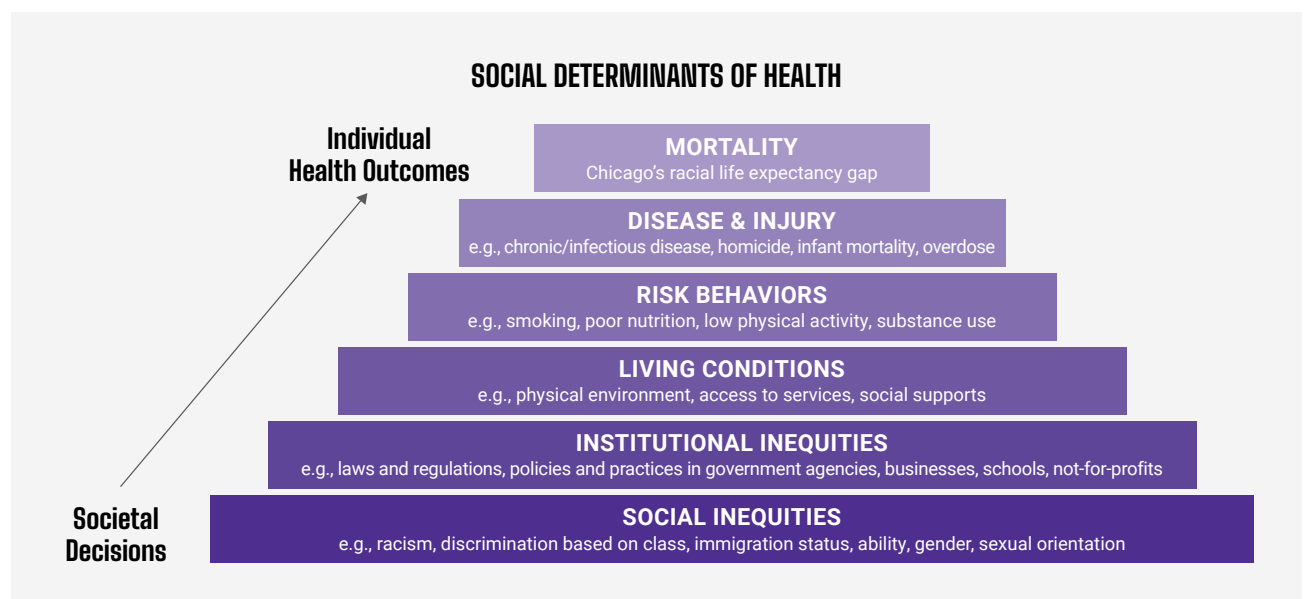
Adopted September 2020, the City's five-year community health improvement plan, **Healthy Chicago 2025**, envisions a future where “all people and all communities have power, are free from oppression and are strengthened by equitable access to resources, environments and opportunities that promote optimal health and well-being.” This vision has yet to be realized. Chicago has unacceptable disparities in the health and well-being of city residents.

The City's most significant health disparities involve Chicagoans' life expectancies. For example, the life expectancy gap between white and Black residents has increased from almost nine to 10 years since 2017, while the life expectancies of Latino residents have decreased by seven years since 2012.

Chicago's health disparities are also deeply connected to the neighborhoods where people live. For example, Fuller Park and Hyde Park are both South Side community areas only three miles apart yet their residents' respective life expectancy gap exceeds 16 years.



The conditions in which Chicagoans are born, grow, live, work and age have a bigger impact on health outcomes than their access to medical resources. Approximately 80% of an individual's wellbeing is influenced by social, economic and community factors, compared to 20% by healthcare. Advancing goals and objectives across all eight We Will pillars are needed to improve citywide health disparities.



# Key Terms

**We Will's historical reckoning activities were initiated through a series of Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) and Department of Planning and Development (DPD) workshops in fall 2020 that included stakeholders' review of challenges and successes of other cities producing citywide plans.**

The themes were used to build out the We Will planning process and produced multiple key themes for future study, including Chicago's need to reckon with a history of systemic injustice and build trust with communities harmed.

*The key terms were refined for We Will Chicago below:*

## KEY TERMS

### Harm

A negative result or burden on a community or population due to formal or informal policies, actions, events or movements.

### Historical Acknowledgment

The formal recognition of one or more harms experienced by a group of people and the naming of who perpetrated the harm.

### Historical Reckoning

An agreement that seeks to rectify a harm, along with policies and measures to prevent the harm from occurring again.





# MAKING OF A FRAMEWORK



**We Will Chicago is a multi-phase planning process to create a formal roadmap for the city’s future.**

**Under the direction of Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, pre-planning was initiated in August 2020 by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, which convened other City departments and public agencies to establish a strategy that puts residents at the forefront of the process.**

## Pre-Planning

*September – December 2020*

A series of workshops was simultaneously hosted by the Metropolitan Planning Council, a nonprofit civic group that provides planning assistance to communities and governments. Held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the workshops were attended by representatives of neighborhood, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations and government entities.

These pre-planning workshops provided an opportunity to learn from other cities that had recently completed citywide plans and collaboratively define and structure what participants wanted to see from the We Will

Chicago planning process.

Meanwhile, DPD conducted virtual conversations that involved more than 600 Chicagoans and their thoughts about what the plan should accomplish. Participants confirmed the guiding principles of equity and resiliency and defined and outlined priorities for each of the seven proposed pillars to guide on-going research and future policymaking.

**The themes include:**

**HISTORIC RECKONING AND TRUST-BUILDING**

**SYSTEMIC EVALUATION OF EQUITY IMPACTS**

**SUSTAINED INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION**

**ACCESSIBLE AND MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

**ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH SHARED METRICS AND TRANSPARENCY**

# Research Teams

January 2021 – July 2022

**With pre-planning complete, We Will's public outreach formally launched in April 2021 with a virtual meeting attended by 800 people. Participants learned how the pre-planning process identified the two principles, five themes and seven pillars. Participants were also advised of next-step needs to identify pillar goals and objectives, and how the goals and objectives would serve as the framework for a draft citywide plan.**



To foster community participation, a citywide application process was initiated to recruit individuals and groups on pillar research teams and an Advisory Committee, including roles with stipends for community-based partners alongside 100 City staff. Five hundred applications were received, and 115 individuals and 25 organizations were selected. Selections ensured diversity in geography, age, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, income, occupation, ethnic identity, religion, education, abilities, interests and areas of skill and expertise. The teams also included representatives of relevant City departments and public agencies.








approximately 100 meetings to review past plans, identify current issues, explore goals, objectives and consider potential policies for implementation. Each meeting was documented by City Bureau, a nonprofit civic media organization, and summaries were posted on the We Will Chicago website. Summaries included a list of attendees, statement of meeting objectives, links to presentations, participant questions and comments and key takeaways.

The Advisory Committee and pillar research teams conducted independent research and hosted

An eighth pillar was added halfway through the research team process in 2022 because the need for meaningful community engagement was a recurring theme in all pillar discussions. This was a task taken on by the Advisory Committee.

## Advisory Committee

## Pillar Research Teams

 ARTS & CULTURE	 CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	 ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE, & ENERGY	 HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS	 LIFELONG LEARNING	 PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY	 TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
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**EACH TEAM INCLUDED:** Volunteers | Community Partners | Co-Chairs | City & Sister Agencies

**EACH TEAM WAS SUPPORTED BY:** Research Lead | Facilitation Lead | Documenter | Artist-Organizer

## Artist-led Engagement

January 2021 – July 2022

Alongside community-led research teams, and through a close partnership with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the City selected Honey Pot Performance and a team of more than two dozen artists to lead a public engagement process.

*“ We want people to be a part of the decision making. But before you get to the decision making you want to be part of the solution itself... that’s the whole process of engagement. ”*

– Ranadip Bose | SB Friedman,  
Senior Vice President

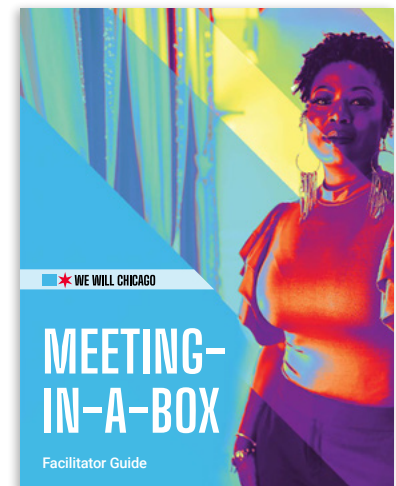


Aligned with the pillars, artist and organizer teams conducted more than 80 virtual and in-person events throughout the city. A mobile team increased the group’s reach to specific locations and constituencies. Artists engaged participants in ways that included performance art, design exercises, creative dialogue and other techniques that facilitated discussion of the critical issues facing communities today, and that created space for new visioning. These opportunities fostered the participation of more than 1,400 residents in the planning process during 2021. Comments and specific policy recommendations were collected by the artists and included in each pillar’s goals and objectives through artist participation in research team meetings and through the artists’ final reports.

## Meeting-in-a-Box

September 2021 – April 2022

The Metropolitan Planning Council and the Chicago Department of Planning & Development created a “Meeting-in-a-Box” toolkit that enabled neighborhood associations, block clubs, families and other groups to host their own We Will meetings to gather feedback. The virtual toolkit provided a facilitator script and a detailed instruction guide on how to solicit and collect group feedback about We Will’s principles, themes and pillars.



# Public Comment

June – November 2022




We Will's draft goals, objectives and policy ideas were created by more than 243 pillar research team participants during nearly two years of monthly meetings. The goals and objectives were presented for public review and comment from June to November 2022 through multiple outreach efforts that included:

**5,048**   
**IN-PERSON SURVEYS**  
completed at more than  
**70** community events  
and festivals.

**5,874**   
**ONLINE SURVEYS**  
completed through  
the We Will website.

**7** **ONLINE WEBINARS**   
co-convened by the  
Metropolitan Planning  
Council and Chicago  
Council on Global Affairs.

**8** **FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS**   
with neighborhood  
associations and other  
stakeholder groups.

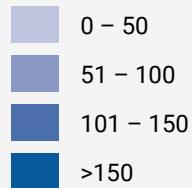
**28** **INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**   
with chambers of  
commerce, business groups,  
ward offices and other entities.

**PAID ADVERTISEMENTS**  
on social media  
and public  
transit systems. 

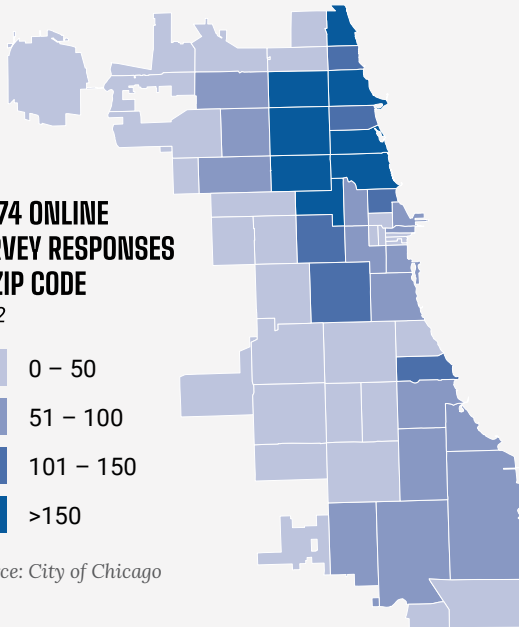
The approximately 100 days of public engagement generated more than 10,000 **RESPONSES** on the draft We Will framework, with nearly **90% OF RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING SUPPORT.**

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS AGREEMENT WITH GOALS BY ZIP CODE

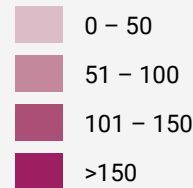
**5,874 ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES BY ZIP CODE**  
2022



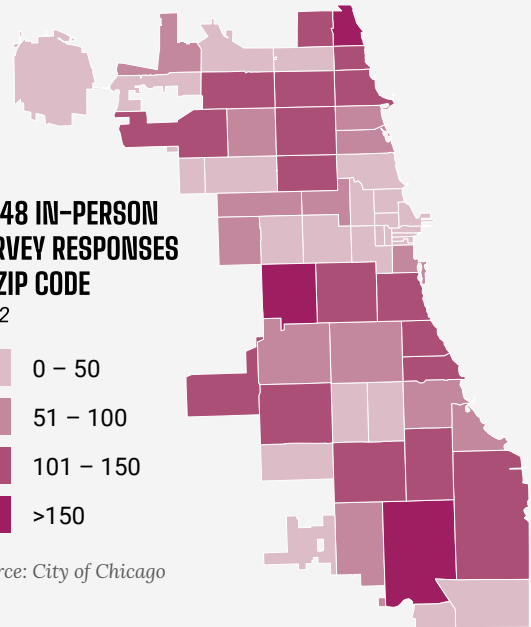
Source: City of Chicago



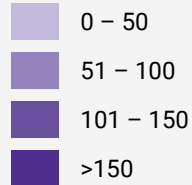
**5,048 IN-PERSON SURVEY RESPONSES BY ZIP CODE**  
2022



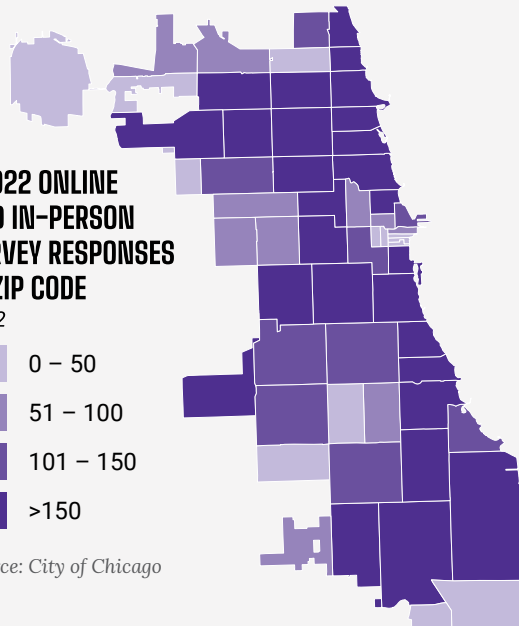
Source: City of Chicago



**10,922 ONLINE AND IN-PERSON SURVEY RESPONSES BY ZIP CODE**  
2022

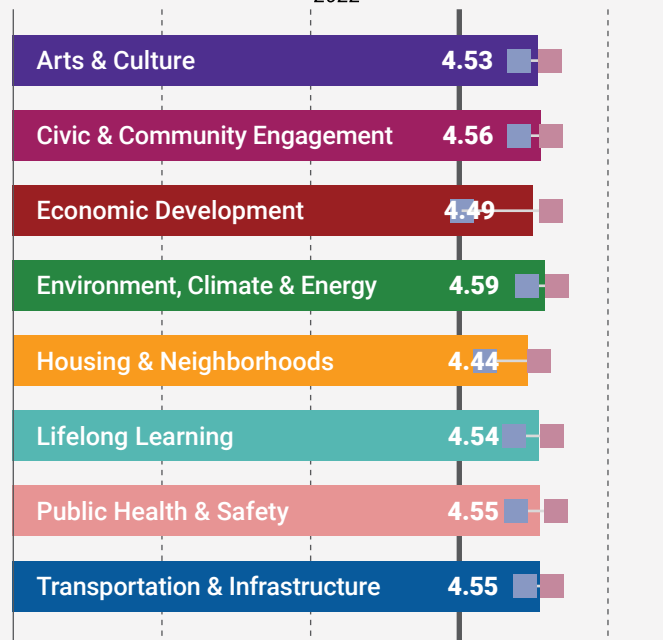


Source: City of Chicago



### COMPARISON OF ONLINE AVERAGE RESPONSE TO EACH PILLAR GOAL AND IN-PERSON SURVEYS

2022



Strongly Disagree (1)    Disagree (2)    Neutral (3)    Agree (4)    Strongly Agree (5)

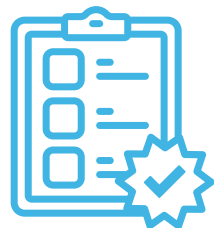
Online average    In person average

Source: City of Chicago

# NEXT STEPS



**The formal adoption of We Will Chicago by the Chicago Plan Commission will facilitate its implementation over the next 10 years through legislation, policies, executive orders and other public and private sector actions.**



The Plan Commission, founded in 1909, reviews and approves public and private development projects and plans that are significant to Chicago's future. The commission's adoption of We Will ensures that its goals and objectives are considered with every new project it reviews and approves, including Planned Developments (PDs) and neighborhood or industry-oriented plans and studies.

***We Will implementation efforts over the next 10 years will be guided by annual reports, interim plan updates, and other efforts that include, but are not limited to:***

## Implementation Steering Committee

An implementation steering committee will facilitate intergovernmental cooperation and public transparency and accountability throughout plan implementation. Created through a future mayoral executive order that extends across City departments and sister agencies, the committee will include City department and sister agency staff along with residents, community, business, philanthropic and other stakeholders. The body will help ensure that We Will's goals and objectives are achieved over time.

## Pillar Action Plans

City departments and sister agencies will collaborate to prepare and periodically update Action Plans that align with goals and objectives across We Will Chicago pillars. These action plans will be public documents that are reviewed by the implementation steering committee and will include short- and long-term milestones for measuring progress.

## Budget Equity and Racial Equity Action Plans

In partnership with the Office of Equity and Racial Justice, City departments are developing strategic plans for advancing racial equity and identifying how their budgets will support equity goals. Beginning in 2022, departments aligned budgets and equity action plans with the goals and objectives of We Will Chicago. This alignment will be continued and expanded in 2023 and beyond.

## Land Use and Zoning Plans

Future neighborhood plans developed by the City, sister agencies, and private and community-based partners will be encouraged to include strategies that align with We Will's goals and objectives, including land use recommendations that involve the City's municipal code. A common practice among major U.S. cities is to follow-up a citywide plan process with updates to land use and zoning plans.

## Engagement Process Improvements

The need for more meaningful community engagement in ongoing city processes was a re-occurring theme across We Will Chicago outreach—and why an eighth pillar of Civic and Community Engagement was added to the plan. As one of many near term next steps, DPD will work with external stakeholders to define and identify engagement standards that should be considered for projects that require City review, approval or assistance.

## Artist Engagement

The City will continue engaging with local artists during the implementation phase and other city and civic processes. For example, in 2023, five funded artist projects will interpret, explore, and bring to life the plan's goals and objectives. Peregrine Bermas, Jonathan Michael Castillo, Yaritza Guillen and Natalie Perkins, Congo Square Theatre Company, and Mobile Makers Chicago—in collaboration with partners from the planning process, their own networks, and the public—will develop works responding to the pillars and other themes throughout the plan.

## Policy Ideas and Equity Analysis Tools

The pillar research teams and other residents engaged through the public comment period produced over 600 policy ideas to advance the Goals and Objectives (see Implementation Starter Guide). Policy ideas range from suggested legislation to budgetary needs for new programs, and more. The implementation phase will include further refinement and assessment of many of these policy ideas as departments are creating pillar action plans, including further public engagement, assessment for operational, financial and legal feasibility, and the use of equity analysis tools to understand impacts. An equity analysis tool is a process to assess how a given policy or program will impact health, racial and environmental equity outcomes.



To see the policy ideas developed by the [We Will Chicago](https://www.wewillchicago.com) team, visit [wewillchicago.com](https://www.wewillchicago.com)







# HOW TO NAVIGATE THE PLAN

01



This document is a **proposed framework** for future City actions to improve Chicagoans' lives.

In it you will find...



**GOALS**

what we want to achieve



**OBJECTIVES**

how we will achieve it



**DATA**

information to support the goals

02

The plan is divided by topics, called **PILLARS**. There are eight pillars, each one has a report.



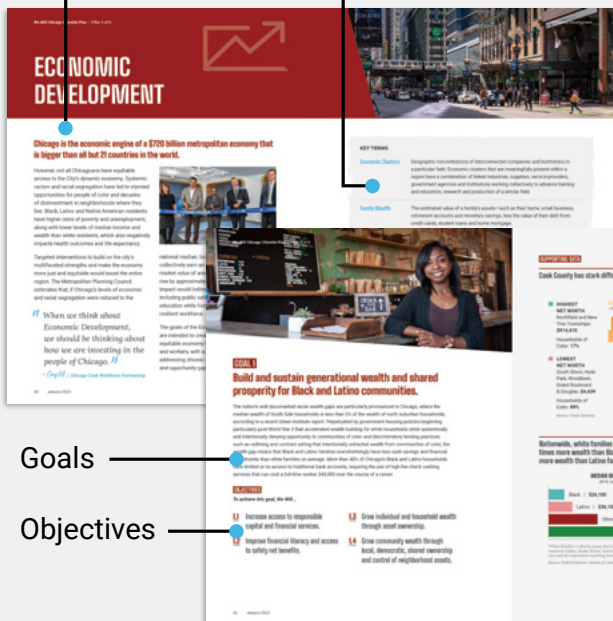
The reports are labeled with the **pillar or topic name** and a **description** of the topic.

03

## EACH PILLAR REPORT INCLUDES...

An introduction

Key terms relevant to the topic



Supporting data

Goals

Objectives

04



Compilation of more than 600 policy ideas generated by the pillar research teams and through the public comment period.

# THE PLAN

PILLAR 1 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## ARTS & CULTURE

Supporting equitable access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago's 77 communities

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 2 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring all Chicago stakeholders have opportunities to help guide the city's future

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 3 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO






## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Creating a more prosperous and equitable economy for all Chicago residents and workers

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)



PILLAR 4 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY

Creating healthy and resilient neighborhoods for Chicagoans to thrive

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 5 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Ensuring that every Chicago neighborhood is safe, inclusive, and vibrant, has healthy, affordable and accessible housing, and connects residents to what they need to thrive

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 6 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## LIFELONG LEARNING

Ensuring that learning opportunities exist for Chicagoans at every stage of life

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 7 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Honoring the intrinsic value of human lives by promoting equity in health and safety

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 8 OF 8

  WE WILL CHICAGO



## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Creating access and connections through safe and reliable physical infrastructure and transportation networks

  CHICAGO [weillchicago.com](http://weillchicago.com)

PILLAR 1 OF 8



■ ★ WE WILL CHICAGO

# ARTS & CULTURE

Supporting equitable access and participation in the arts throughout Chicago's 77 communities

■ ★ CHICAGO  
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

[wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)

# ARTS & CULTURE



**Arts and culture are essential components of community life, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity, educational and economic benefits, and improvements to the social and physical wellbeing of residents.**

For individuals, the benefits of arts engagement and participation are tangible. According to research collected by the Center for Arts in Medicine at the University of Florida, arts engagement and participation are associated with concrete improvements in mental health and lower risk of physical illness.

Despite contributing value to all communities, access to arts and culture is unevenly distributed throughout Chicago. While nearly 80 percent of Chicagoans believe arts and culture improve neighborhood vitality, only half of residents believe arts and cultural activities are available where they live, according to a recent Chicago Community Trust survey.

The Arts & Culture pillar's goals are intended to expand the accessibility of arts and culture opportunities in support of community health and wellbeing, to make Chicago a place where artists and creative workers can build and sustain successful careers, and to grow public awareness and appreciation for city's diverse cultural traditions, organizations, and artists.



*“ Every community needs different things. Support looks different. Support should be led by the people who are trusted in their community through partnerships, nonprofits and informal projects. ”*

*– Wisdom Baty | Honey Pot Performance, Artist-Organizer*



## KEY TERMS

### Creative Sector/ Industries

An overarching term to capture the breadth of activity within artistic and cultural industries, including nonprofit organizations, creative businesses, museums and art galleries, music, film and television, digital media, theater, dance, craft, fashion, publishing, architecture and design. Activities involve the development, production, dissemination and preservation of creative goods and services, as well as related endeavors such as education and management.

### Creative Worker

Anyone who earns income from creative, cultural or arts-based pursuits, or works within the creative sector as an employee, independent contractor, entrepreneur or gig worker.

“ Arts and culture will be coming out of neighborhood-based cultural spaces that will be independent from ... [past] models ... it won't require any bureaucratic validation to exist ... it will be able to be sporadic, permanent, continuous and planned. But most importantly, it will be both accessible and affordable. ”

– Libby | Ravenswood, We Will participant



## GOAL 1

# Support the ability of creative sector workers, organizations and businesses to thrive.

Chicago's cultural environment requires almost all of the area's professional artists to work more than one job, according to a Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) report. While the number of nonprofit arts and culture organizations per capita in Chicago is higher than many other major U.S. metropolitan areas, their average budgets are significantly smaller and they are disproportionately underfunded by local government, the report also determined. Financial support for arts and culture organizations in Chicago is also uneven, with organizations led by people of color receiving half the grant funding that majority white entities typically receive, according to a report from ENRICH Chicago and Heartland Alliance.

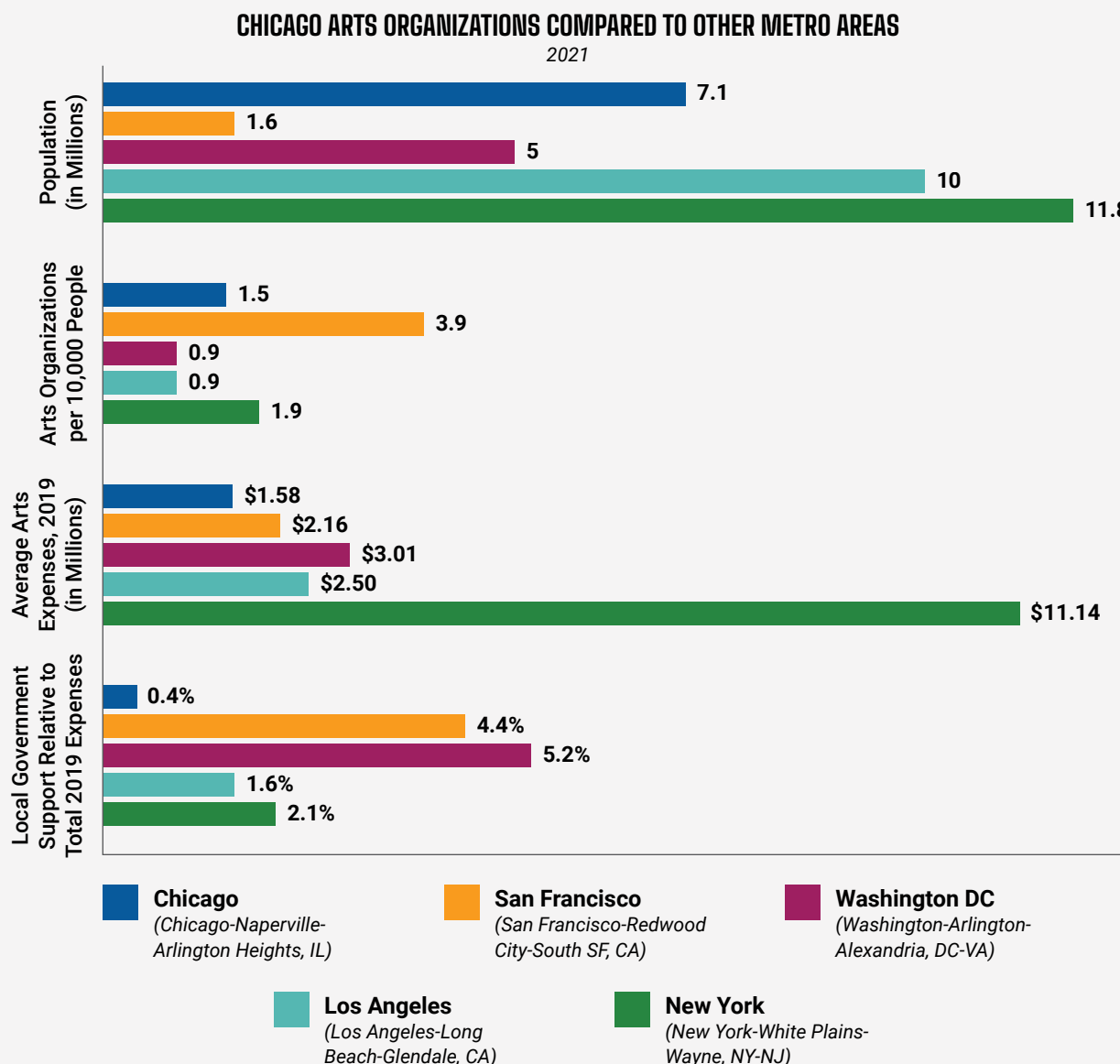
## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 1.1** Strengthen the infrastructure and systems of support for creative sector organizations, businesses and individuals in ways that are transparent and accountable to the public.
- 1.2** Decrease barriers that have prevented access to city funding for creatives and arts and culture organizations; prioritizing racial, gender, disability, age, geographic and other equity considerations.
- 1.3** Ensure that employment policies for creative workers used by public and private entities are fair and equitable.
- 1.4** Support the partnerships and relationships necessary for creatives to develop skills, pursue opportunities and access jobs and space to sustain and grow careers in Chicago.

## SUPPORTING DATA

Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture organizations have significantly smaller budgets and have historically received less local government funding than organizations in other metropolitan areas, though City funding for the arts has more than doubled since 2019.



Source: SMUDataArts and Bloomberg Associates

“ We need to be upfront ... the choices of how Chicago invested municipal money led to the creation of cultural assets and businesses in the Loop and Navy Pier ... We can be specific about spatial differences that were impacted by individual – but also by larger – priorities in the past. ”

– Henry Wishcamper | Urban Juncture, Co-Director of Community Development





**GOAL 2**

## Engage artists, creative businesses and cultural organizations to advance the quality of life in all Chicago communities.

Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture entities are predominantly headquartered in the Loop area and along the lakefront. As a result, many residents do not benefit from the economic, educational and quality-of-life contributions of the city's arts scene.

**OBJECTIVES**

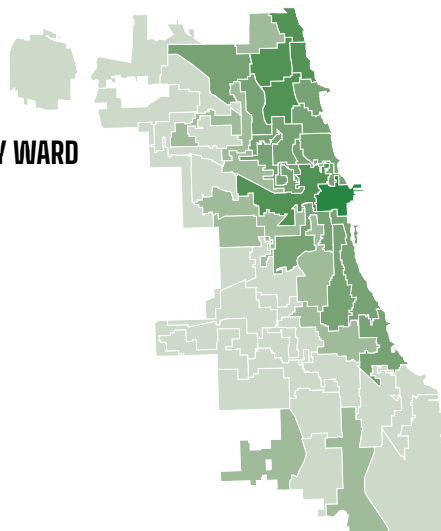
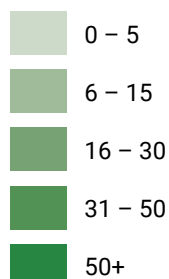
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 2.1** Use the power of arts and culture to support vibrant and healthy communities, recognizing and building on existing resources and assets.
- 2.2** Increase the number of creative businesses and cultural spaces in community areas that lack them, prioritizing support for existing cultural assets within those communities.
- 2.3** Prioritize private and public investment in historically under-resourced community areas.

**SUPPORTING DATA**

The vast majority of Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture organizations are located along the lakefront.

**NUMBER OF  
NONPROFIT ARTS  
ORGANIZATIONS BY WARD**  
2019



Source: SMUDataArts

**14%** of Chicago's nonprofit arts and culture organizations are located in just **ONE WARD (DOWNTOWN);**

**2/3 OF THE CITY'S WARDS** are home to **JUST 21%** of the City's arts and culture nonprofit organizations.

## GOAL 3

# Ensure all Chicagoans have access to robust, relevant and joyful arts education and to creative workforce opportunities at every stage of their lives.

The arts are vital to the wellbeing of individuals and the wellbeing of civil society. According to a 2021 report from the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, researchers have demonstrated causal links between arts education and critical thinking outcomes, increased tolerance, increased empathy, and higher motivation to engage with arts and culture. Recent studies have found the benefits of arts education to include: improvements in students' standardized writing scores; reductions in disciplinary infractions; increases in students' compassion for others; increased school engagement; improved attendance; and higher college aspirations. Roughly 40% of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) facilities are failing to provide strong arts programming, and Black students are disproportionately less likely than students in other racial or ethnic groups to access quality arts education, according to a recent report from Ingenuity Inc.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 3.1** Advance access to pre K–12 arts education within Chicago Public Schools and other school-based providers.
- 3.2** Ensure lifelong arts education opportunities are accessible within each Chicago community area.
- 3.3** Strengthen the infrastructure needed to support pathways to careers in arts education as part of broad workforce development efforts.

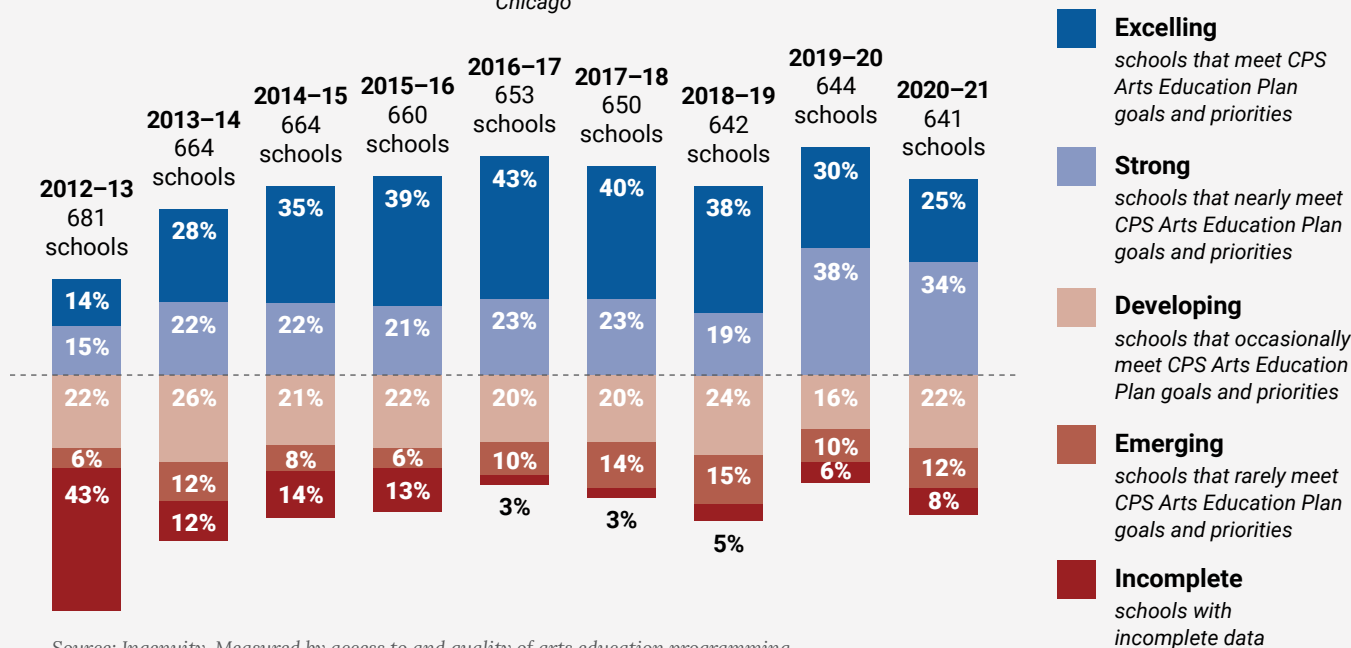


**SUPPORTING DATA**

The percentage of CPS schools that meet or nearly meet the goals and priorities of the Arts Education Plan has more than doubled since 2012.

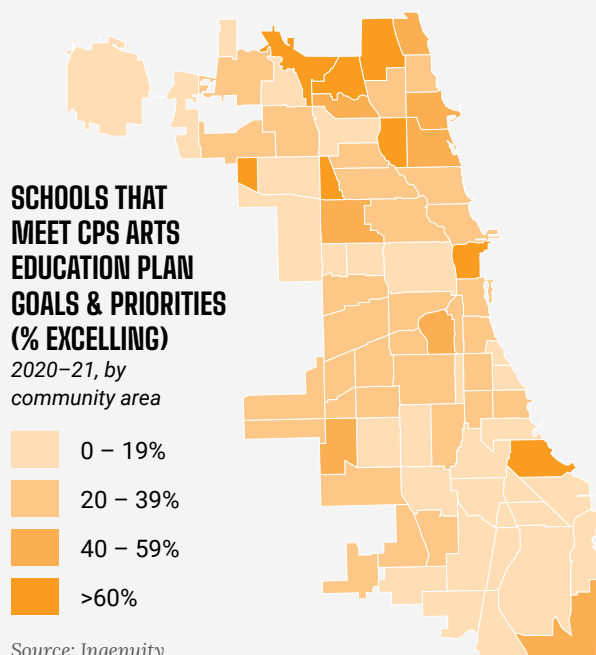
**CREATIVE SCHOOLS CERTIFICATION CUMULATIVE SCORES OVER TIME**

Chicago



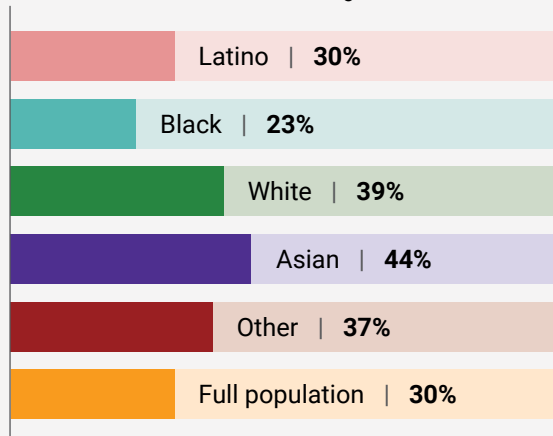
Source: Ingenuity. Measured by access to and quality of arts education programming

Access to arts education varies widely across the city, with Black students being significantly less likely to have access to quality arts programming.



**CPS STUDENTS ATTENDING SCHOOLS THAT MEET ARTS EDUCATION PLAN GOALS & PRIORITIES (% EXCELLING)**

2020-21, Chicago



Source: Ingenuity

## GOAL 4

# Promote awareness and appreciation for the value of the city’s cultural sector—its current and historical contributions—to residents and those beyond the Chicago's borders.

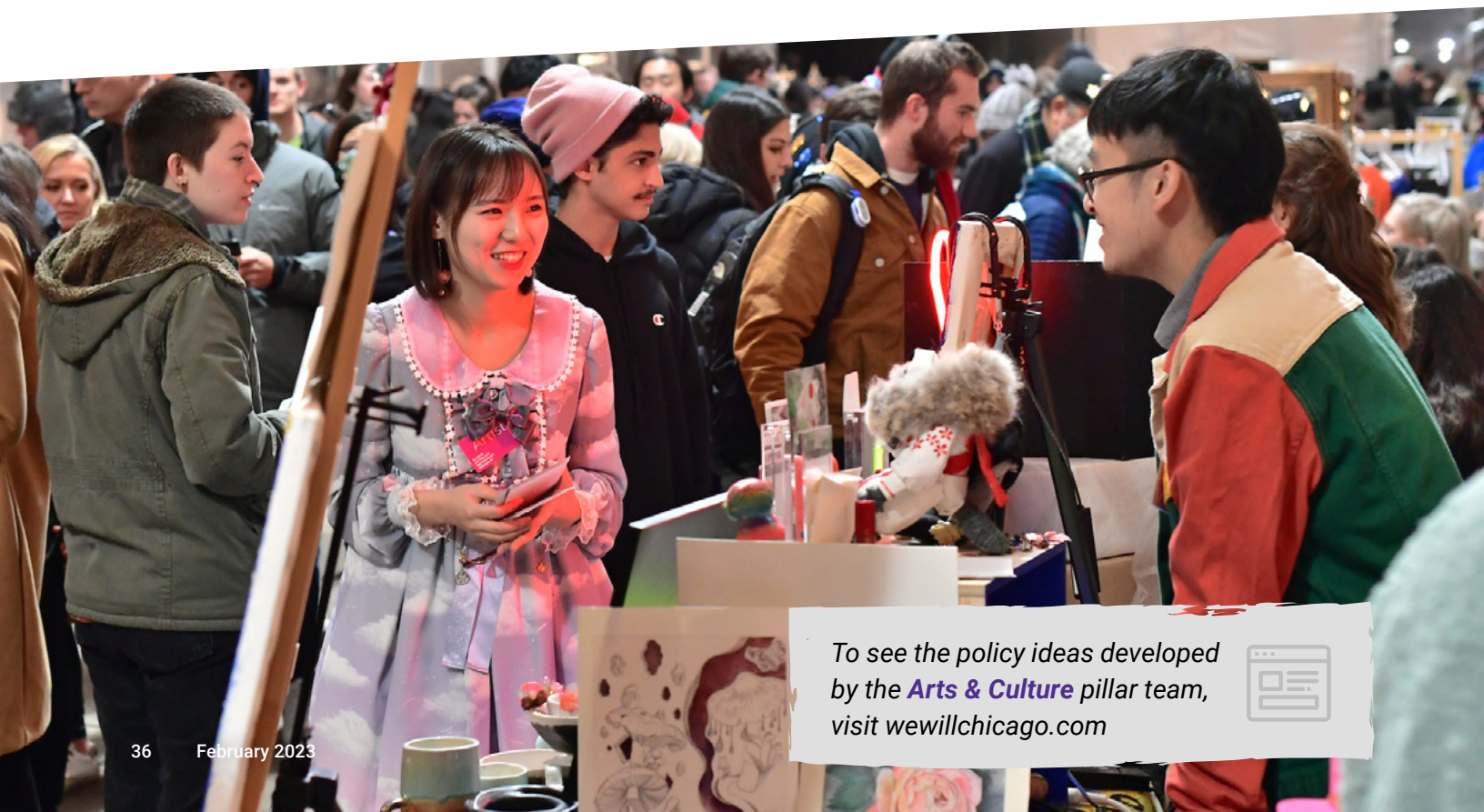
City support for local arts organizations can take many forms, including coordination with sister agencies, local media and cultural organizations to promote Chicago’s cultural resources and opportunities. In 2022, DCASE launched a strategic initiative to market more neighborhood-based arts programming, in addition to ongoing efforts to highlight downtown opportunities. As the city grows and changes with time—welcoming new residents from across the country and around the world—these strategies should continue to evolve, promoting the cultural traditions and celebrations of new and existing residents alike.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

**4.1** Expand the focus of the City’s marketing efforts to highlight the cultural assets and programming of all community areas.

**4.2** Develop resources that strengthen and amplify the marketing and advocacy efforts of local arts and culture groups and organizations.



To see the policy ideas developed by the **Arts & Culture** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)



PILLAR 2 OF 8



  **WE WILL CHICAGO**

# CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring all Chicago stakeholders  
have opportunities to help guide  
the city's future

  **CHICAGO**  
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

[wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)

# CIVIC & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



**As Chicago confronts challenges like racial health, wealth gaps and climate change, the City needs an engaged, empowered public that leverages the power of democracy to improve lives and communities.**

Chicago needs its government entities to be responsive and accountable to evolving, community-identified concerns and solutions through engagement activities that promote democratic decision-making and trust-building. For decades, many Chicagoans, especially youth, communities of color and residents with disabilities, have been ignored, disengaged or shut out from local democratic processes.

While City agencies undertake community engagement efforts in some form, approaches are hampered by a lack of staff capacity, training, inter-agency coordination and procedures that promote accountability and accessibility. Public engagement by the city is therefore seldom anchored in trust, and residents perceive meetings as superficial afterthoughts that confirm predetermined solutions. Open-ended discussions without implementation have led to frustration and fatigue that continues to impair and reduce participation in democratic processes.



The goals of the Civic & Community Engagement Pillar include developing new, creative public agency tools and partnerships to proactively build trust with communities that have been historically excluded from many of the benefits of living in a great city like Chicago.



## KEY TERMS

### Civic Engagement

Involves any individual or group activity that addresses issues of public concern to protect public values or makes a change in a community. It is instrumental to democracy.

### Community Engagement

The process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting their well-being. It is a powerful vehicle for environmental and behavioral changes that will improve the health of the community and its members. It often involves partnerships and coalitions that help mobilize resources and influence systems, change relationships among partners and serve as catalysts for changing policies, programs and practices (CDC, 1997).

### Truth and Reconciliation

A process undertaken to discover and reveal past wrongdoing by a government (or non-state actors) in the hope of resolving conflict left over from the past.

“ Most people value their time, and if they feel like the process does not allow them to give input, they check out very quickly... I think there’s a difference between transparency and empowering people to contribute to the decision-making process. ”

– *May Toy* | Skinner Park Advisory Council, President

## GOAL 1

# Build more robust and effective civic infrastructure to enable Chicagoans to improve their lives and neighborhoods.

Because community engagement by the City of Chicago occurs across many different departments, sister agencies and entities like ward offices, there are no uniform standards on how to conduct public input and engagement processes that shape neighborhood-level and citywide decisions. Strengthening the ways Chicagoans can engage in public life includes enforcing systemic improvements to the City's processes and tapping into Chicago's abundance of neighborhood organizations that already bring neighbors together to strengthen their communities, and help residents access resources every day.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 1.1** Create stronger, proactive, long-term partnerships with community organizations, block clubs and other coalitions to increase engagement.
- 1.2** Support and encourage more inclusive and creative community engagement across City departments and sister agencies such as the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Chicago Public Libraries (CPL).
- 1.3** Work with the Native American and disability communities, among others, to articulate and collect both quantitative and qualitative data that represents those populations.



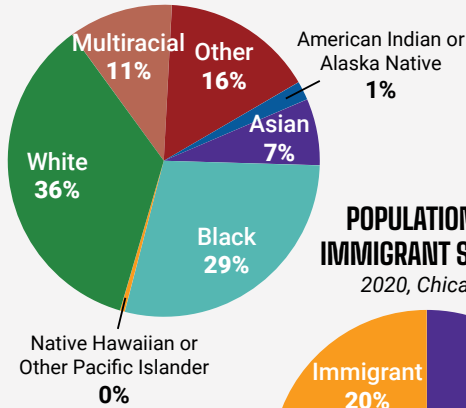


**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Chicago's civic infrastructure should address the City's diverse population across race, ethnicity, gender, age, ability and immigration status.**

**POPULATION BY RACE**

2020, Chicago

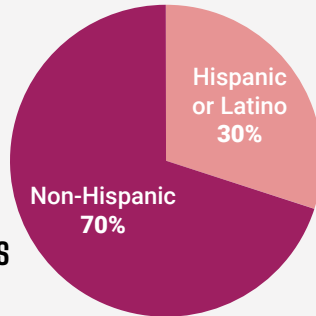


Note: Population of two or more races includes roughly 37,000 Chicagoans who identify as mixed-race including any Native American ancestry.

Source: 2016–20 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2020 U.S. Census, CMAP

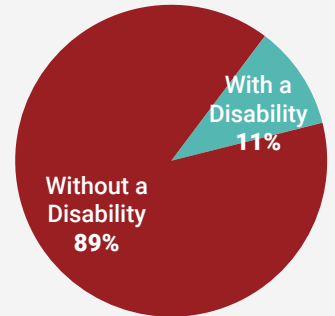
**POPULATION BY ETHNICITY**

2020, Chicago



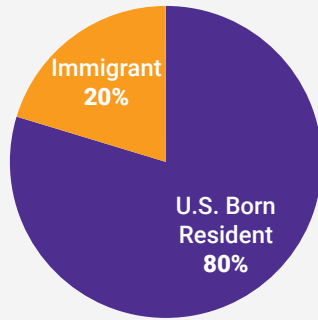
**POPULATION BY DISABILITY**

2020, Chicago



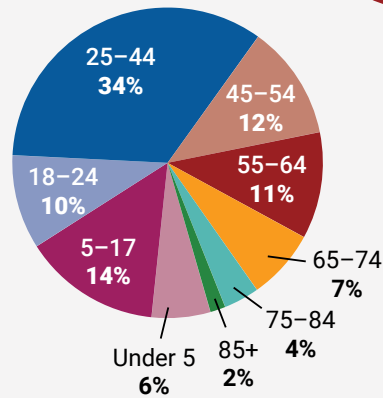
**POPULATION BY IMMIGRANT STATUS**

2020, Chicago

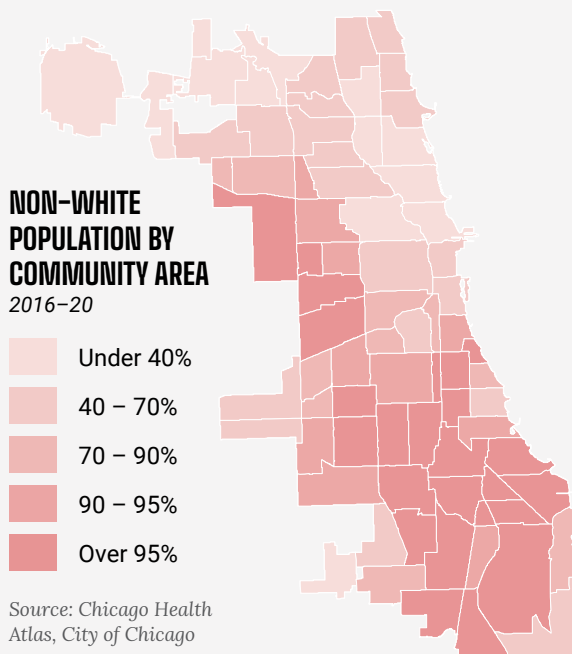


**POPULATION BY AGE**

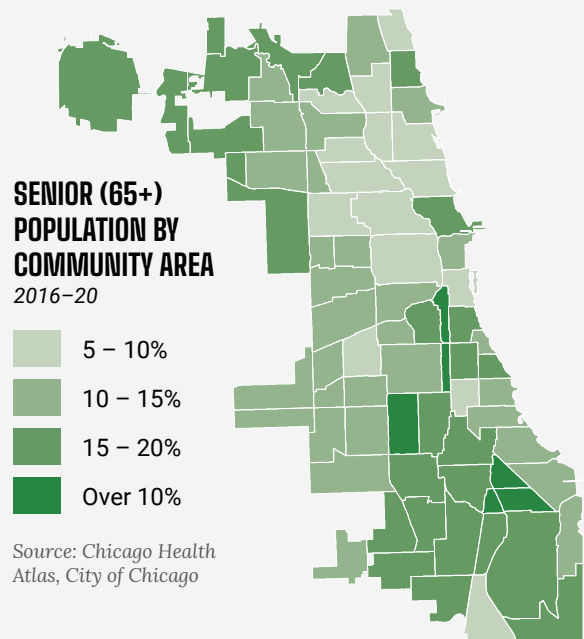
2020, Chicago



**Most Chicago community areas have a non-white majority.**



**13% of the City's population is 65 years or older.**



## BIG IDEAS

Use post-it note to share anything you'd like:



### GOAL 2

## Increase public access and participation in civic and democratic processes.

Local democracy is strongest when residents are deeply engaged—informing and shaping policies that directly impact their communities and advocating for issues critical to a more equitable and resilient future. Only an engaged public can hold political leaders accountable and elect leaders who are representative of Chicago's many diverse needs.

### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

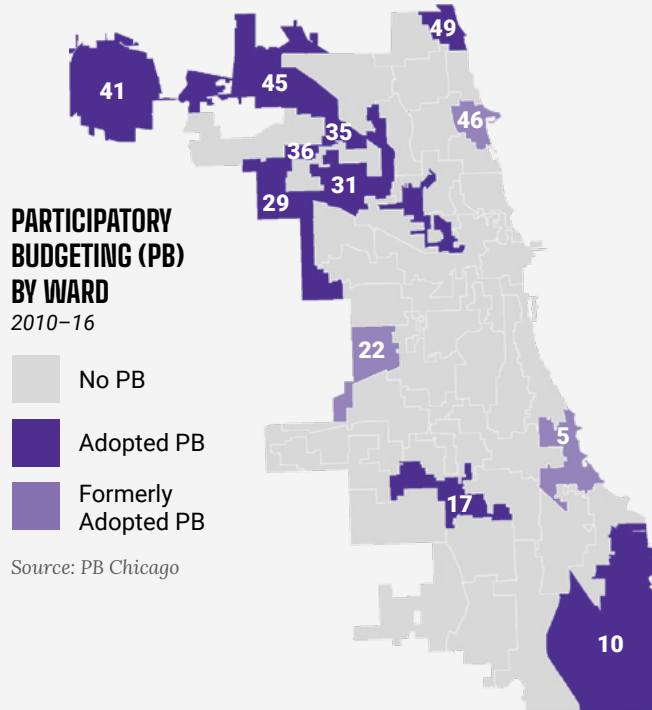
**2.1** Ensure equitable access to virtual and in-person public meetings and processes across City departments and agencies.

**2.2** Increase equitable representation and participation in government and democratic processes.

**2.3** Welcome new immigrants and strengthen Chicago's leadership as a sanctuary city.

**SUPPORTING DATA**

Many Chicago wards utilize a participatory budgeting process.



**251** PROJECTS were funded through the Participatory Budgeting process between 2010-16.

Selected projects included underpass murals, street lighting improvements, bike lanes, pedestrian improvements, street and sidewalk repairs, accessibility improvements, and tree planting.



“ I just wanted to bring transparency to the lens of accessibility. Sometimes organizations will feel like they’re being transparent, but the information that they’re providing is only in one language. ”

– *Maureen Burns* | Community Health Worker

Approximately 36% of Chicago residents speak a language other than English.

**TOP 7 LANGUAGES BY PREFERENCES**  
2016-20, Chicago



Source: ACS 2016-20 5-Year Estimates

## GOAL 3

# Improve government transparency and Chicagoans' access to data.

Chicagoans should have meaningful access to City records, not just the ability to access them, but the ability to find them in a user-friendly way with sufficient context to identify and understand the information. Access to open data fuels equity by enabling City officials, residents, advocates and journalists to identify and address disparities in neighborhood conditions and access to City services. The City needs to build on recent open data and modernization improvements to truly make all resident-facing systems accessible, particularly for people with disabilities and low access to technology.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 3.1** Improve and modernize City data collection, disaggregation and distribution systems to develop a best-in-class practice of affirmative and automated release of data and records.
- 3.2** Ensure equitable access to data for all Chicagoans.
- 3.3** Make it easier for Chicagoans to understand and participate in City Council, committee and other public body processes.

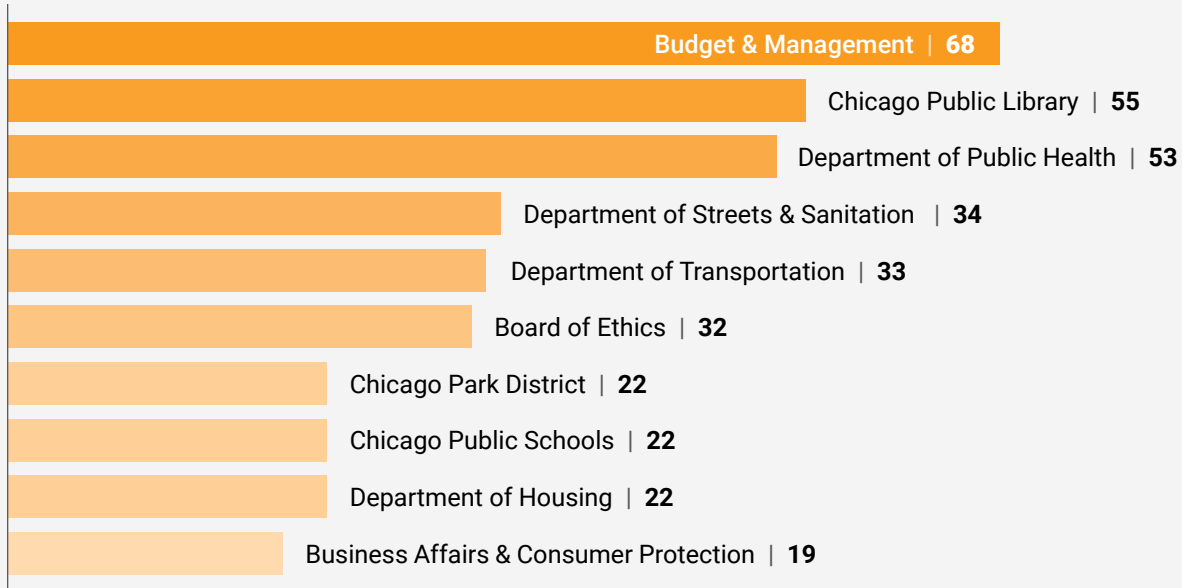


**SUPPORTING DATA**

**A wide range of City departments have committed to open access to data.**

**DEPARTMENTS WITH THE MOST OPEN DATASETS IN CHICAGO'S OPEN DATA PORTAL (# OF DATASETS)**

2021–22, Chicago

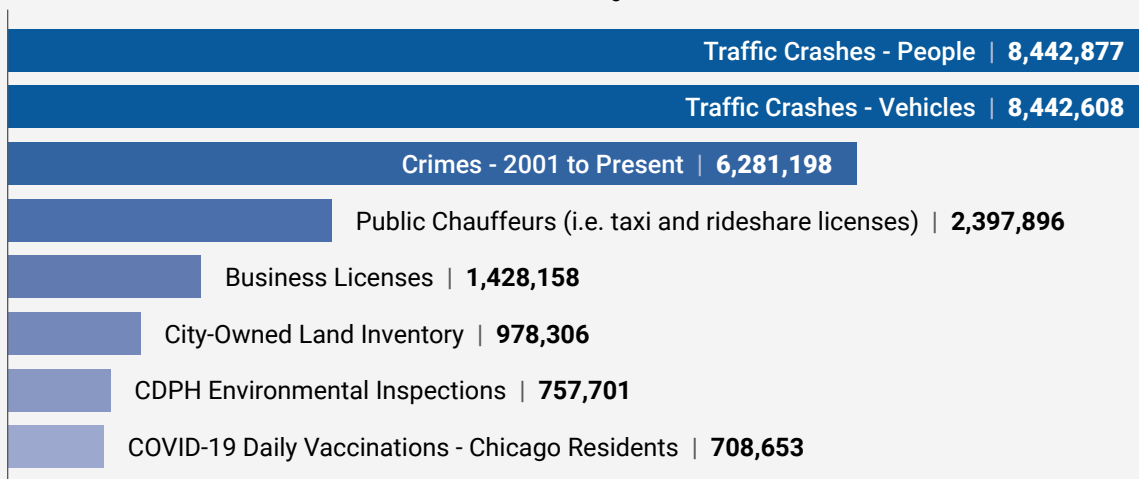


Source: City of Chicago AIS

**The City's open data resources are accessed millions of times every year.**

**POPULAR DATASETS ACCESSED BY NUMBER OF VISITS 2021–22**

2022, Chicago



Source: City of Chicago AIS

## GOAL 4

# Eliminate barriers to accessing City services and support.

Chicagoans interact with government in myriad ways every day—from paying water bills to checking out library books, accessing City-funded mental health services or getting car stickers. The City must strive to make all resident-facing services as simple, efficient and user-friendly as possible. This also means continuously improving access to services and supports for underserved populations, like undocumented residents, residents reentering society from incarceration, residents experiencing homelessness and new immigrants or refugees.

### OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

**4.1** Make City processes touching residents, workers, visitors and businesses more streamlined, accessible and equitable.

**4.2** Protect and provide resources to support residents who are disproportionately vulnerable and often excluded from safety net benefits and other services.



**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Chicago's poverty rates from 2017 to 2021.**

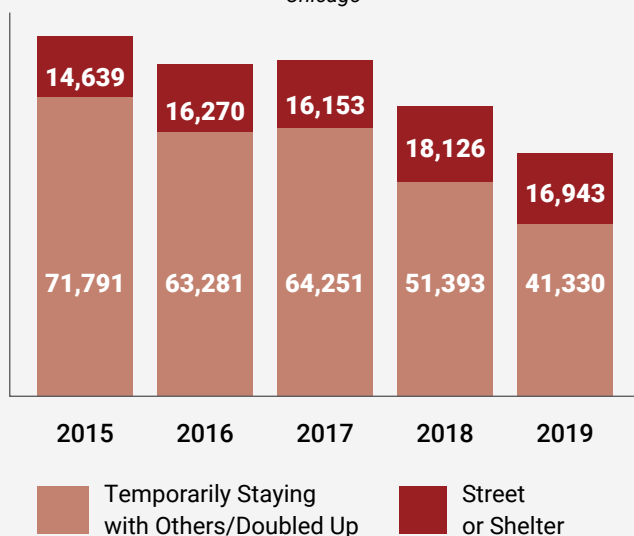
**PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY**  
Chicago

	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL	COUNT	% OF TOTAL
Black	259,625	32%	245,493	31%	229,545	29%	217,518	28%	217,185	28%
White	177,208	14%	166,112	13%	156,642	12%	138,022	11%	129,552	11%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	170	21%	165	24%	221	29%	196	22%	259	26%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,596	21%	1,522	19%	1,794	22%	1,548	17%	1,835	14%
Asian	31,267	19%	32,259	19%	31,379	18%	28,490	16%	29,341	16%
Other Race	67,060	22%	60,880	21%	55,836	20%	52,684	19%	53,361	18%
Multiracial	13,506	19%	13,094	18%	12,800	17%	19,895	14%	27,879	14%
Hispanic or Latino	168,182	22%	153,530	20%	141,462	18%	127,506	17%	128,067	16%
Non-Hispanic	382,250	20%	365,995	19%	346,755	18%	330,847	18%	331,345	17%

Source: 2016–21 ACS 5-Year Estimates

**Homelessness has recently decreased but still impacts more than 58,000 people.**

**TYPES OF HOMELESSNESS EXPERIENCED**  
Chicago



Source: Chicago Coalition for the Homeless

“ When we talk about getting to equity, we’ve talked about it as both an outcome and a process. We’re going to focus on equity as a process and we know that requires a new way of doing business. ”

— *Kate McMahon* | Director, Health Equity in All Policies, Chicago Department of Public Health



## GOAL 5

# Ensure equity, community engagement and historical reckoning drive public decision-making.

Chicago has disparities across all quality-of-life indicators by race and ethnicity. In order to realize the We Will Chicago vision for greater equity and resiliency, leaders must change the standard way that government operates. Race-neutral or “color-blind” policies only exacerbate existing inequities and inequities. The legacy of structural racism and public policies that harmed Black, Latino, Asian and Native American communities provide a responsibility and opportunity for leadership in the public, private, and philanthropic sectors to acknowledge the history and proactively build equity considerations into all decision-making. Many communities have lost trust—or never trusted—government, and have no faith in public accountability to historically marginalized communities. City government needs to support collective racial healing to reimagine and build a more equitable, inclusive future.

## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 5.1** Establish standards and structures for community-driven decision-making.
- 5.2** Educate City officials and staff about equity and racial justice.
- 5.3** Integrate health, racial equity and climate impact tools and analysis into policymaking and planning.
- 5.4** Support ongoing truth, reconciliation and healing efforts.

*To see the policy ideas developed by the **Civic & Community Engagement** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)*





PILLAR 3 OF 8



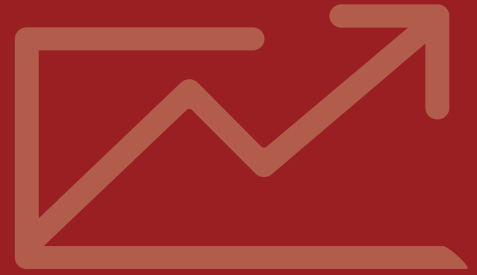
■ ★ WE WILL CHICAGO

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Creating a more prosperous and equitable economy for all Chicago residents and workers

■ ★ CHICAGO  
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

[wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Chicago is the economic engine of a \$720 billion metropolitan economy that is bigger than all but 21 countries in the world.**

However, not all Chicagoans have equitable access to the City's dynamic economy. Systemic racism and racial segregation have led to stymied opportunities. There have been decades of disinvestment in neighborhoods where people of color live.

Targeted interventions to build on the city's multifaceted strengths and make the economy more just and equitable would boost the entire region. The Metropolitan Planning Council estimates that, if Chicago's levels of economic and racial segregation were reduced to the national median, local households would collectively earn an additional \$4.4 billion and the market value of area goods and services would rise by approximately \$8 billion. The economic



impact would indirectly improve other city issues, including public safety, transportation and education while fostering a more diverse and resilient workforce.

The goals of the Economic Development pillar are intended to create a more prosperous and equitable economy for all Chicago residents and workers, with a particular focus on addressing chronic racial and ethnic wealth and opportunity gaps.

*“ When we think about economic development, we should be thinking about how we are investing in the people of Chicago. ”*

*— Cory M* | Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership



## KEY TERMS

### Economic Clusters

Geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field. Economic clusters that are meaningfully present within a region have a combination of linked industries, suppliers, service-providers, government agencies and institutions working collectively to advance training and education, research and production of a similar field.

### Family Wealth

The estimated value of a family's assets—such as their home, small business, retirement accounts and monetary savings, less the value of their debt from credit cards, student loans and home mortgage.

### Unbanked & Underbanked

An unbanked household means no one one in the household has a checking or savings account at a bank or credit union. Underbanked households are households that have a bank account but use nonbank transactions such as money orders and check cashing, or alternative credit products and services such as payday loans or pawn shops.

*“ We have Black businesses that are committed to community, legacy and have a willingness to thrive. Historic black business in thriving black communities that are being resilient despite racism, strategic disinvestment and limited resources is the economic development that we want to encourage and get more support on. ”*

*— Serrater Chapman*



## GOAL 1

# Build and sustain generational wealth and shared prosperity for Black, Latino and Native American communities.

The nation's well documented racial wealth gaps are particularly pronounced in Chicago, where the median wealth of South Side households is less than 5% of the wealth of north suburban households, according to a recent Urban Institute report. Federal government housing policies beginning particularly post-World War II accelerated wealth-building for white households while systemically and intentionally denying opportunity to communities of color. Discriminatory private sector lending practices such as redlining and contract selling also intentionally extracted wealth from communities of color and perpetuated a wealth gap where Black and Latino families overwhelmingly have less cash savings and financial investments than white families on average. More than 40% of Chicago's Black and Latino households have limited or no access to traditional bank accounts, requiring the use of high-fee check cashing services that can cost a full-time worker \$40,000 over the course of a career.

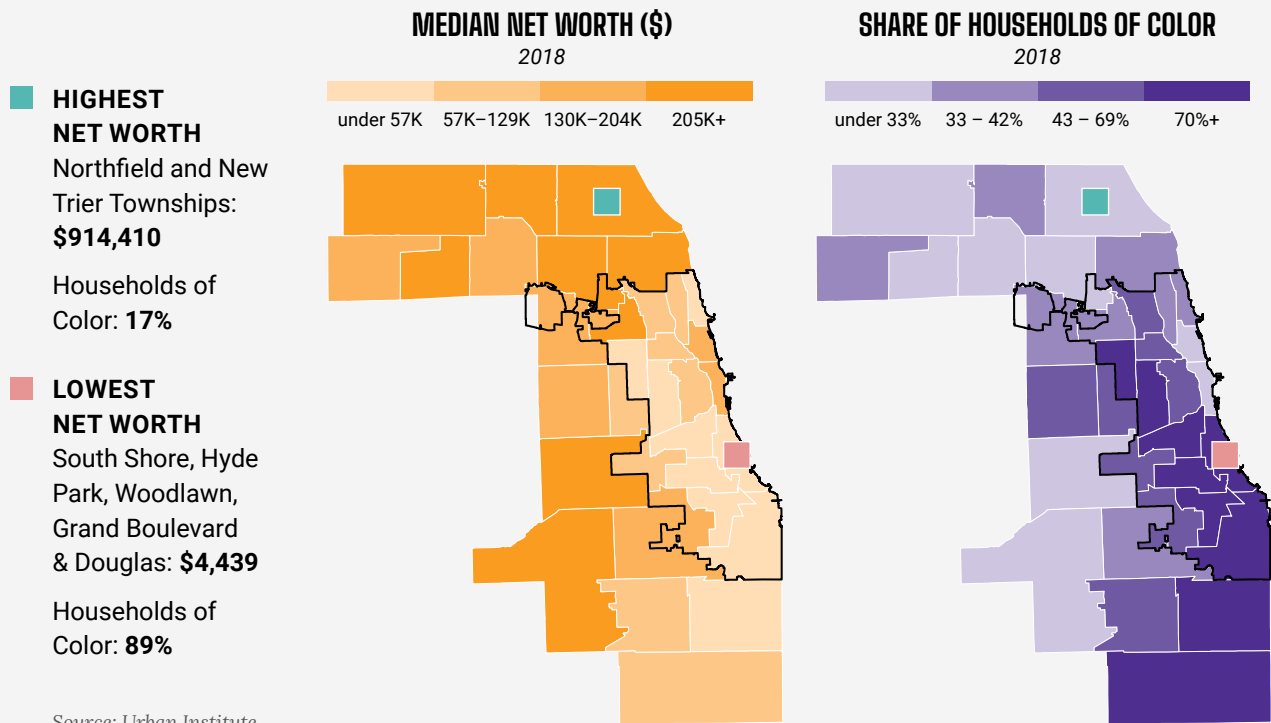
## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 1.1** Increase access to responsible capital and financial services.
- 1.2** Improve financial literacy and access to safety net benefits.
- 1.3** Grow individual and household wealth through asset ownership.
- 1.4** Grow community wealth through local, democratic, shared ownership and control of neighborhood assets.

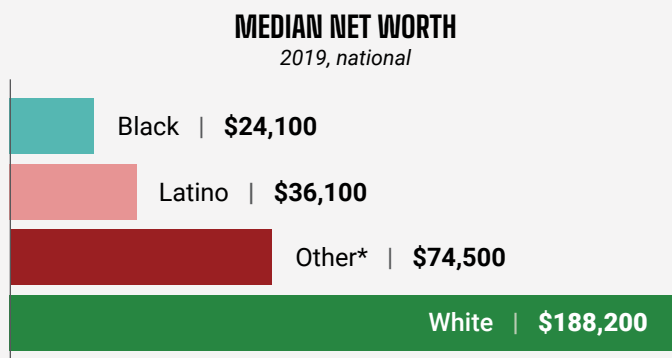
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Cook County has stark differences in wealth across communities.**



Source: Urban Institute

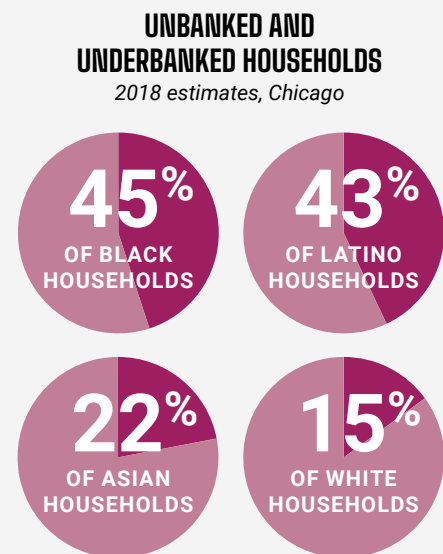
**Nationwide, white families have approximately eight times more wealth than Black families and five times more wealth than Latino families.**



\*Other families—a diverse group that includes those identifying as Asian, American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, other race and all respondents reporting more than one racial identification

Source: Federal Reserve—Survey of Consumer Finances 2019, SB Friedman

**Nearly half of Black and Latino families don't use traditional banks for financial services.**



Source: Prosperity Now Estimates Based on 2018 Census Data

## GOAL 2

# Support business growth throughout Chicago, especially businesses owned by Black, Latino and Native American people.

Chicago has one of the world's largest and most diversified economies, and the city is globally competitive in multiple economic clusters including financial services, marketing and publishing, manufacturing, transportation distribution and logistics (TDL), life sciences, healthcare and information technology. However, much of the city's economic activity is concentrated in and around downtown.

Many majority-Black, South Side neighborhoods have less than one quarter the number of active businesses compared to majority-white, North Side neighborhoods. Business ownership by race and ethnicity is also uneven. Black and Latino residents make up approximately 60% of the city's population but own only 4% (Black) and 9% (Latino) of local businesses, according to recent U.S. Census Bureau data.

## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

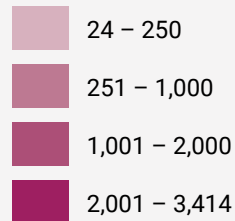
- 2.1** Support Chicago's economic clusters that have high potential for growth and benefit Chicagoans and their neighborhoods.
- 2.2** Prioritize resources and investment in small businesses and entrepreneurship programs.
- 2.3** Increase the availability of quality, affordable real estate in viable commercial and industrial areas.
- 2.4** Promote equitable public and private sector procurement processes.



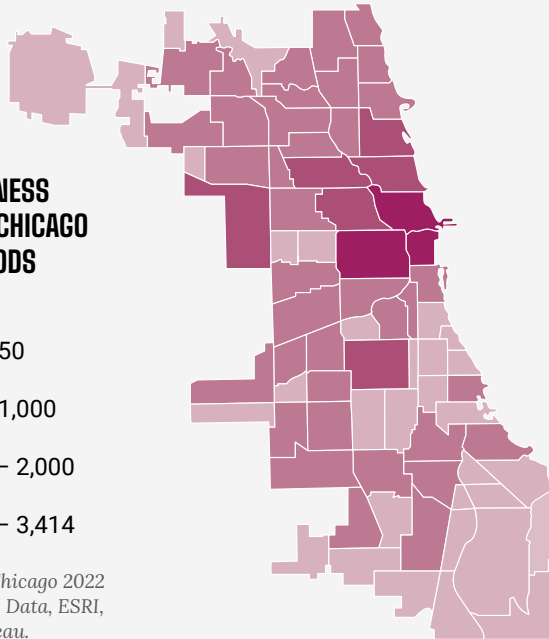
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**South Side communities have a fraction of the business licenses in other areas.**

**NUMBER OF UNIQUE BUSINESS LICENSES IN CHICAGO NEIGHBORHOODS 2022**



Source: City of Chicago 2022 Business License Data, ESRI, U.S. Census Bureau.



For every four businesses in a majority-white North Side community area,



A majority-Black South Side community area only has one active business license.

**Business ownership is primarily white and male.**

**BUSINESS OWNERSHIP**

2017 (race and ethnicity), 2020 (gender), City of Chicago

	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES	% OF BUSINESSES OWNED	% OF POPULATION
White	38,086	75%	36%
Black	1,845	4%	29%
Asian	5,499	11%	7%
Native American or Alaska Native	100	0.2%	3%
Other Race	5,067	10%	25%
Hispanic or Latino	46,104	91%	70%
Non-Hispanic	4,393	9%	30%
Male	39,690	79%	49%
Female	10,807	21%	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,497</b>	<b>100%</b>	-

Source: 2017 Annual Business Survey, 2020 U.S. Census, SB Friedman



### GOAL 3

## Invest in equitable and inclusive workforce development to build resilient economic clusters.

Despite the addition of 170,000 jobs to Chicago's economy between 2011 and 2019, the city's unemployment rate remains uneven by race. Black and Latino unemployment rates are four and two times higher than white unemployment rates respectively, according to 2020 Census data. Black Chicagoans also have the lowest median household income among all races and their incomes grew at the slowest rate during this time. As people of color become the majority of the region's workforce, achieving racial equity will have significant economic benefits. According to a National Equity Atlas study, eliminating racial gaps in income could boost the regional economy by \$136 billion per year.

### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

**3.1** Promote career pathways to high-quality, living-wage jobs in both stable and growing economic clusters.

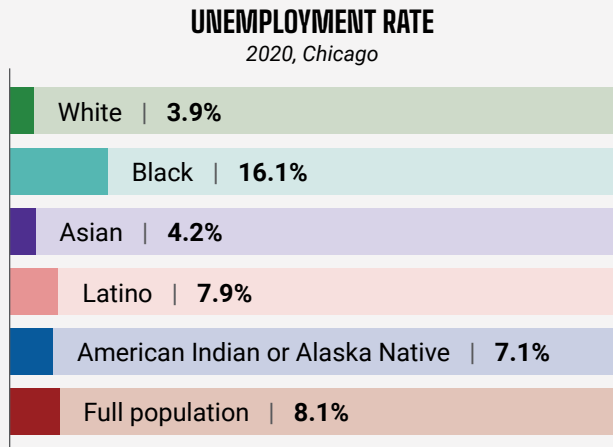
**3.2** Enhance employer leadership in hiring, retaining and promoting diverse workforces.

**3.3** Identify and remove barriers to job participation.



**SUPPORTING DATA**

**The unemployment rate of Black residents is four times larger than white residents.**



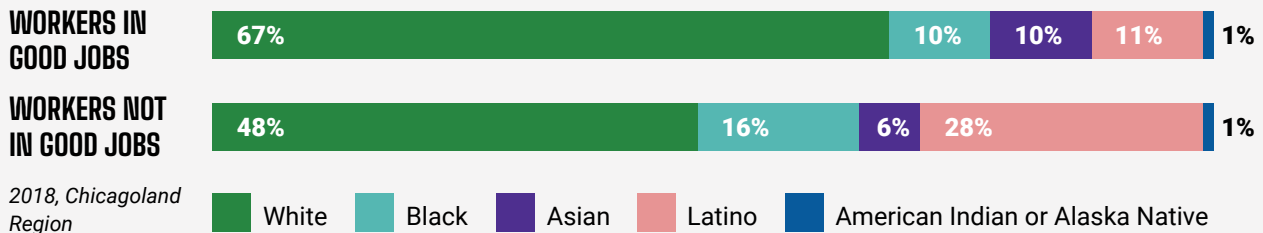
Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 2016–20, Chicago Health Atlas

“ The Chicago region’s gross domestic product could be more than \$136 billion larger if racial gaps in income were eliminated. ”

– 2021 PolicyLink and USC Equity Research Institute

**White workers are overrepresented in good\* jobs overall.**

\*Characteristics include living-wage compensation, stable or growing base of employment and resiliency to automation.



2018, Chicagoland Region

Source: Advancing Workforce Equity in Chicago, PolicyLink

**Black Chicagoans have the lowest median household incomes.**

	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	LATINO	AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE
2010	\$81,740	\$38,540	\$69,605	\$52,237	*
2020	\$96,091	\$37,904	\$84,905	\$56,061	\$59,971
% Change	18%	-2%	22%	7%	*

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2006–10, 2016–20, Chicago Health Atlas

\*American Community Survey began tracking Native American Median Household Income for survey years 2016–20, historical data was unavailable for inclusion in 2010 and Percent Change calculation.

## GOAL 4

# Promote equitable public, private and philanthropic investment in Black, Latino and Native American communities without displacement.

Private market lending in the form of home mortgages, business loans and real estate investment continues to be inequitably distributed. Between 2011 and 2017, Chicago's majority-white neighborhoods received nearly five times as much private investment per household compared to majority-Black neighborhoods and nearly three times more private investment per household than majority-Latino neighborhoods, according to a recent Urban Institute report. Some public and philanthropic investors have been deliberate in trying to bridge the investment gap, but their combined value is only 1/16th of private investment. The report also noted that private investment growth in neighborhoods of color is usually accompanied by gentrification or the influx of more affluent residents and businesses.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 4.1** Create vibrant and stable neighborhoods that remain and become more affordable for existing residents and businesses.
- 4.2** Facilitate the creation of thriving commercial corridors in Black, Latino and Native American communities.
- 4.3** Enhance the public sector's toolkit of financial incentives for neighborhood economic development.

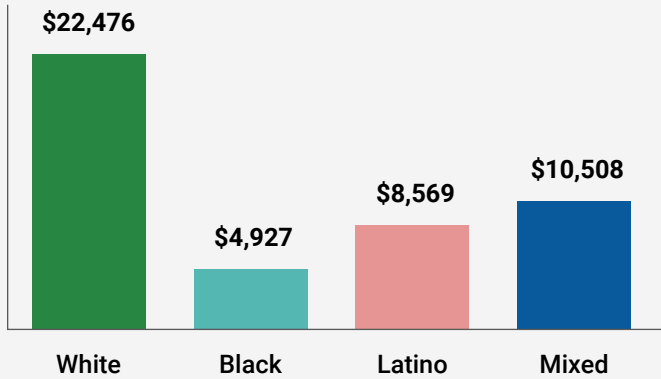


**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Private investment in Chicago varies by neighborhood.**

**AVERAGE ANNUAL MARKET INVESTMENT\* PER HOUSEHOLD**

at Median, 2017 Dollars, Chicago



The median majority-white neighborhood received

**4.6x** as much private market investment per household as the median majority-Black neighborhood, and

**2.6x** as much investment as the median majority-Latino neighborhood.

\*Market sources of investment refers to privately issued capital such as business loans, home mortgages and real estate investments.

Source: Urban Institute Report: "Neighborhood Disparities in Investment Flows in Chicago"

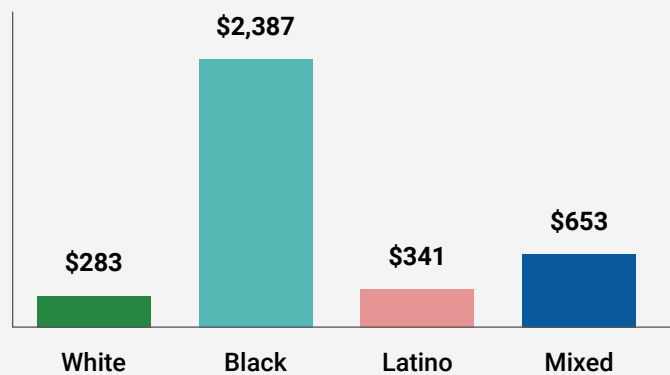
“ I feel like the people who should be involved in economic development are the people in communities that are affected directly. Their voices should be at the table with this. ”

– Ashley Taylor | Humboldt Park

**Public and mission-driven institutions invest significantly more per household in majority-Black neighborhoods.**

**AVERAGE ANNUAL MISSION AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT\* PER HOUSEHOLD**

at Median, 2017 Dollars, Chicago



Note: Label refers to majority group in the neighborhood.

\*Mission-driven investments includes lending by community development finance institutions (CDFIs), faith-based organizations, government agencies, and philanthropies. Public investment refers to federal programs including allocations of Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants, the HOME program, HUD operating subsidies to public and assisted multifamily housing, Choice Neighborhoods Awards, and Housing Choice Vouchers.

Source: CDFI Fund, Community Development Block Grants, Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the HUD HOME program, HUD operating subsidies to public and assisted multifamily housing, HUD Choice Neighborhoods awards, Opportunity Finance Network, U.S. Department of Education Promise Neighborhoods awards and U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2012–16)

## GOAL 5

# Promote Chicago’s assets nationally and amplify positive narratives about South and West side neighborhoods.

Negative news reports of violence in national and local media can easily overshadow a neighborhood’s positive attributes such as its rich history, strong sense of community, cultural and recreational attractions, thriving local businesses and untapped spending power. Most West and South Side residents who participated in a recent University of Texas survey about news coverage in their neighborhoods indicated it was “too negative.” Ongoing negative coverage perpetuates false perceptions of risk and biases that reinforce decades-long neighborhood disinvestment trends.

### OBJECTIVES

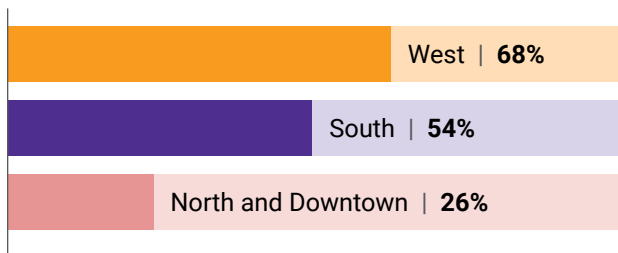
To achieve this goal, We Will...

**5.1** Change the narrative about Chicago’s South and West side neighborhoods.

**5.2** Promote South and West side neighborhood destinations to tourists and residents alike.

### SUPPORTING DATA

Percentage of survey respondents who agree, “stories about my neighborhood are too negative.”



Source: Van Duyn, Emily, Jennings, Jay, and Stroud, Natalie Jomini. (2018, January). Chicago news landscape. Center for Media Engagement.

“ The best way [to] dispel negative South Side stereotypes is to have people come and see the neighborhood for themselves. Forty percent of Chicagoans are not from Chicago. They have to be educated. ”

– Nedra Fears | The Greater Chatham Initiative, Executive Director

To see the policy ideas developed by the **Economic Development** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)



PILLAR 4 OF 8



■ ★ WE WILL CHICAGO

# ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY

Creating healthy and resilient  
neighborhoods for Chicagoans  
to thrive

# ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY



**Chicago’s “Urbs in Horto” motto — City in a Garden — reflects the many environmental resources and neighborhood assets that benefit both people and wildlife.**

The city’s 8,800-acre park system is considered one of the nation’s most effective in terms of access, amenities and acreage, according to the Trust for Public Land. Meanwhile, the city’s mass transit system provides comprehensive travel options, decreases traveler’s reliance on cars and contributes to a high level of neighborhood walkability for most residents, according to national studies.



At the same time, environmental burdens that stem from decades of inequitable development patterns persist citywide, primarily in majority Black and Latino communities. These negative impacts can include greater vulnerability to air pollution due to underlying health and social factors, increased flood risk and higher than average neighborhood temperatures. Populations who are most vulnerable to pollution impacts include health-compromised individuals, older adults, pregnant individuals, children, individuals with less income stability, communities located closer to sources of pollution and communities with limited access to goods, social services and other resources. Some of these vulnerabilities are the result of harmful discrimination and underinvestment policies.

The Environment, Climate & Energy pillar aims to utilize data- and stakeholder-informed approaches for greenhouse gas reduction, climate change resiliency and improvements to open space and natural ecosystems citywide.



## KEY TERMS

### Climate Change

A change in global or regional climate patterns from the mid-20th century onwards that are largely attributed to increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.

### Climate Resiliency

The ability to anticipate, prepare for and respond to hazardous events, trends or disturbances related to climate. Improving climate resilience involves assessing how climate change will create new or alter current climate-related risks and taking steps to better cope with these risks.

### Environmental Justice

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. (U.S. EPA)

*“ The data can tell us one thing about the inequitable distribution of amenities and burdens in our city right now ... that was the product of conscious decisions about where to put resources and the only way to undo that is to make conscious decisions about putting resources different places now. ”*

– Rob Weinstock | University of Chicago Law School, Assistant Clinical Professor of Law



## GOAL 1

# Prioritize climate resiliency efforts in overburdened communities and for low- income individuals through both public- and private- sector efforts.

Citywide strategies should be prioritized by neighborhood through geographic assessments of public health data, the availability of public resources, vulnerability to extreme weather events, energy efficiency and other factors that impact the resiliency and sustainability of local residents.

## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 1.1** Ensure community input on development proposals, zoning and permitting.
- 1.2** Establish and enforce climate, health and environmental criteria and policies for development reviews.
- 1.3** Require decision makers to be transparent and provide community members access to environmental and scientific data used for decision-making.
- 1.4** Establish requirements for private sector participation and responsibility in climate resiliency efforts and control of neighborhood assets.



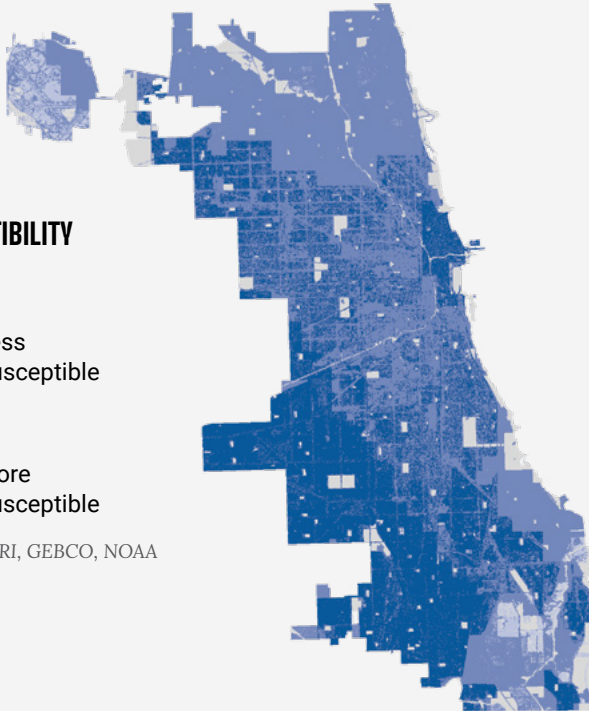
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Flood risk is higher on the South and West sides of the city.**

**FLOOD SUSCEPTIBILITY INDEX**  
2018

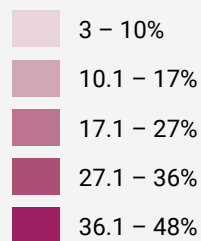


Source: ESRI, GEBCO, NOAA  
NGDC

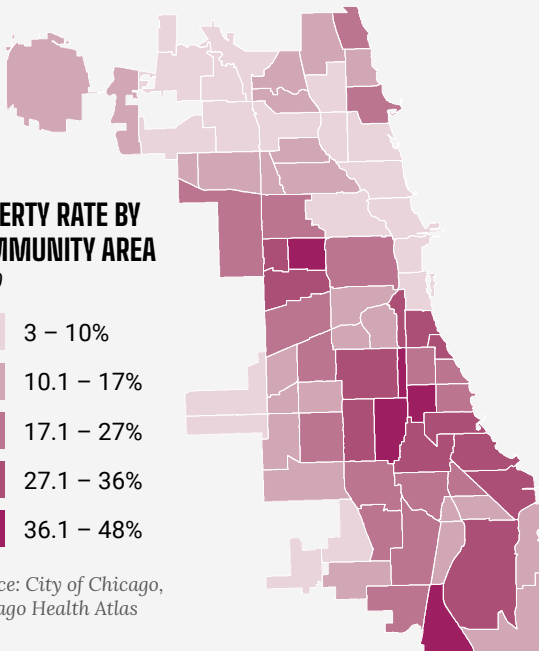


**Communities with the highest poverty rates are also among the most susceptible to flooding and hardships.**

**POVERTY RATE BY COMMUNITY AREA**  
2020

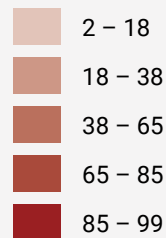


Source: City of Chicago,  
Chicago Health Atlas



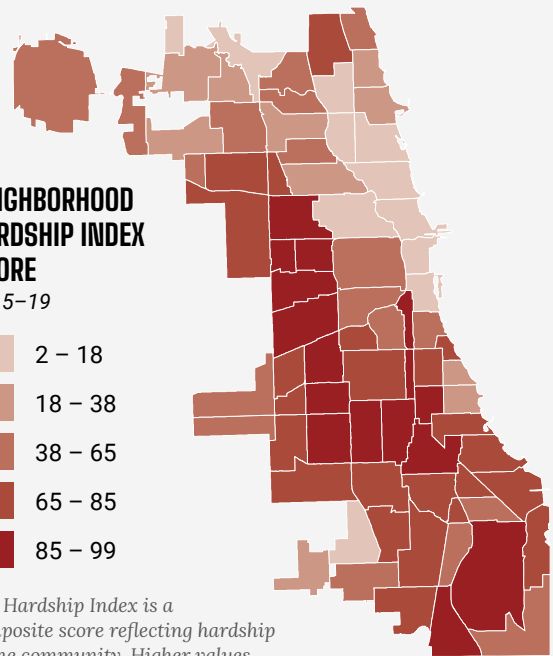
**Community area hardship scores generally reflect their poverty rates.**

**NEIGHBORHOOD HARDSHIP INDEX SCORE**  
2015–19



The Hardship Index is a composite score reflecting hardship in the community. Higher values indicate greater hardship.

Source: Chicago Health Atlas



## GOAL 2

# Use environmental justice principles to establish criteria and policies for geographies harmed by environmental degradation.

Approximately half of Chicago's industrial businesses are located within 26 designated industrial corridors, with the remainder located in areas zoned for industry throughout the City. The effects associated with proximity to these businesses are currently inequitably distributed. According to the Chicago Health Atlas, the neighborhoods that are vulnerable to excessive air pollution and industrial traffic are primarily on the West, Southwest and Far South sides.

## OBJECTIVES

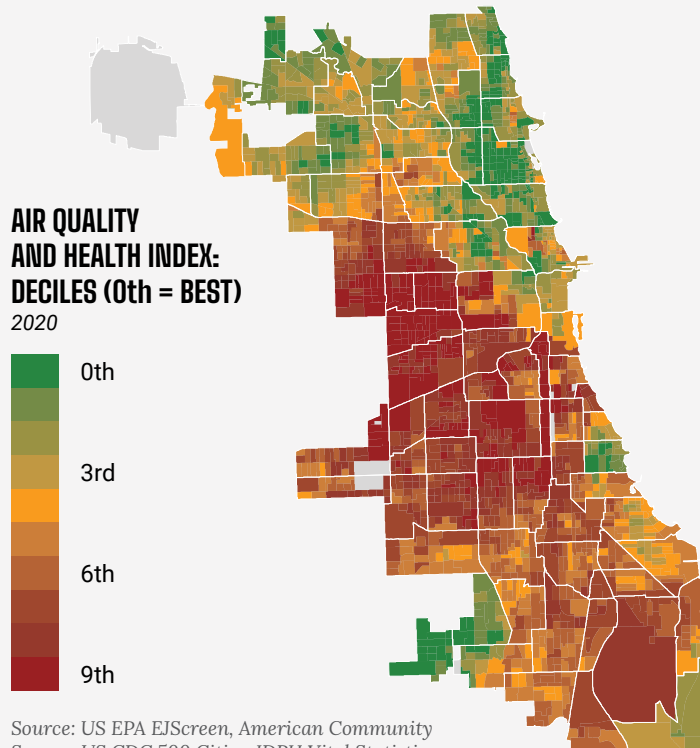
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 2.1** Incorporate opportunities for residents to be part of land-use and transportation planning for their neighborhoods.
- 2.2** Help ensure community organizations have tools and resources to address the climate crisis.
- 2.3** Establish a process to identify, inventory and determine the value of historic disinvestment, inequitable policy and negative health impacts on residents.
- 2.4** Conduct a cumulative impact assessment and establish targets for positive outcomes in communities that are environmentally overburdened.



**SUPPORTING DATA**

**The South and West sides of the City are more vulnerable to the effects of air pollution.**

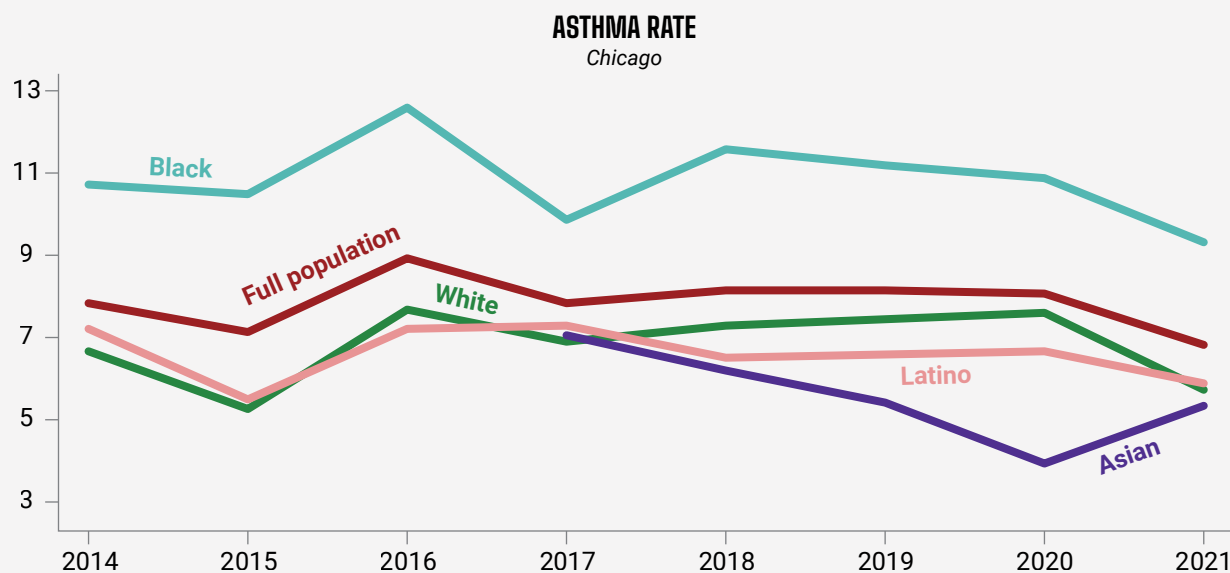


Source: US EPA EJScreen, American Community Survey, US CDC 500 Cities, IDPH Vital Statistics, Various Years combined, 2011-18

The Air Quality + Health Index combines community-level data on **AIR POLLUTION WITH HEALTH AND SOCIAL FACTORS** that identify areas that are most likely to experience negative impacts.

Census tracts in green **ARE LESS VULNERABLE**, while tracts in red **ARE MORE VULNERABLE.**

**Black residents have higher rates of asthma than any other racial or ethnic group.**



Source: Chicago Health Atlas

## GOAL 3

# Foster public and private partnerships to reduce waste and encourage the reuse of locally-produced materials, services and energy.

Despite campaigns designed to encourage residents and businesses to recycle, Chicago's recycling rate as a percentage of total waste was recently estimated at less than 9%, compared to rates exceeding 75% in cities like Los Angeles. More circular economic practices, where goods are produced, shipped, used and recycled within relatively short distances, can benefit all Chicagoans.

### OBJECTIVES

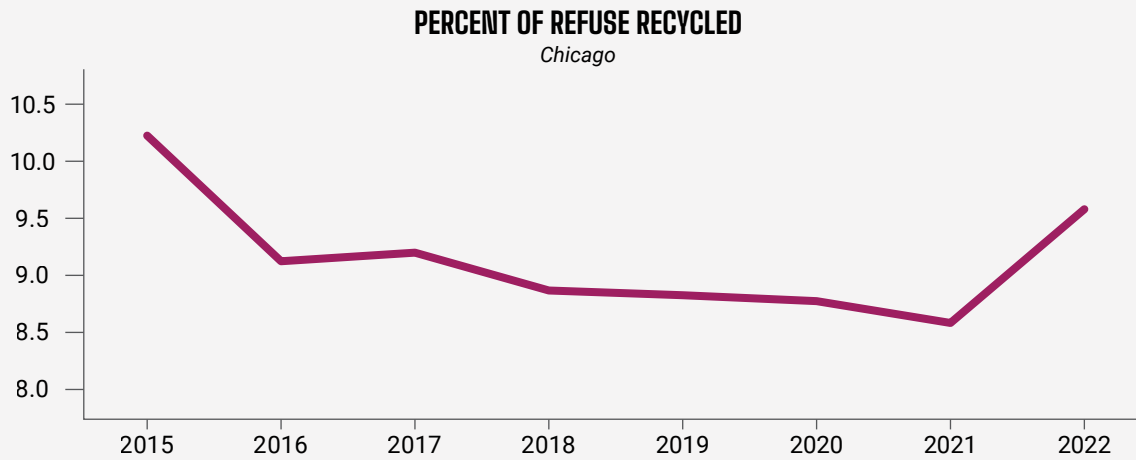
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 3.1** Create cross-sector partnerships with racially diverse businesses to increase the City's waste reduction and diversion rates and leverage its buying power.
- 3.2** Establish contract requirements for the removal and disposal of materials from supply and waste chains.
- 3.3** Establish a community education curriculum that raises awareness about materials and waste handling.
- 3.4** Implement and support the development of urban agriculture.
- 3.5** Facilitate renewable energy generation and distribution including reuse and recycling.
- 3.6** Create development codes for new building technologies as they arise and prioritize the reuse of materials in construction.



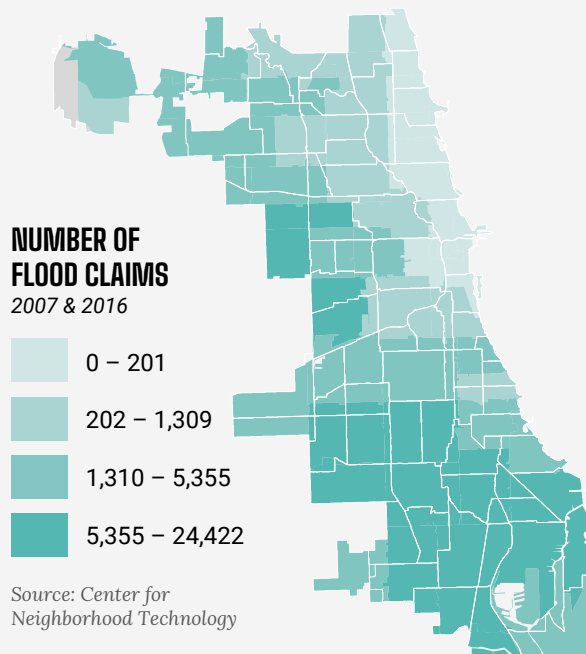
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Chicago's recycling rate increased in 2022 after declining for several years.**



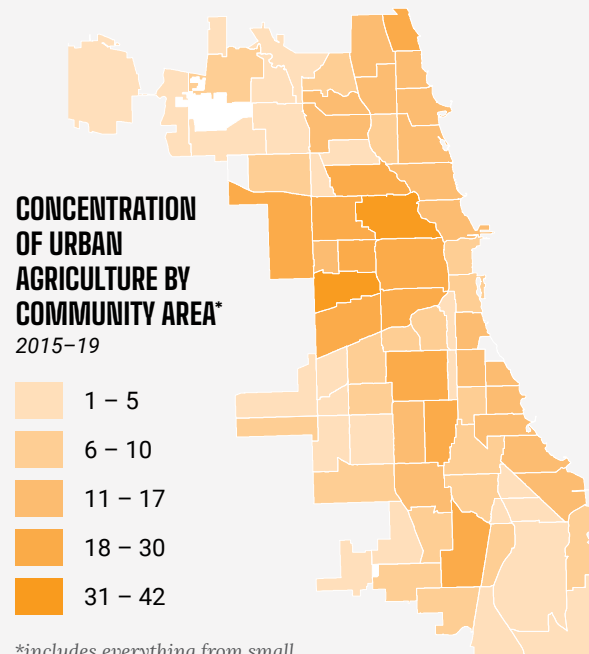
Source: City of Chicago

**87% of flood claims are paid in Black and Latino communities.**



Source: Center for Neighborhood Technology

**Urban agriculture sites are located citywide.**



\*includes everything from small residential gardens to commercial urban farms

Source: Chicago Urban Agriculture Mapping Project



## GOAL 4

# Maintain and expand green space, natural resources and conservation efforts for the benefit of all Chicagoans.

With virtually all Chicagoans living within a 10-minute walk to a park, the City has ample existing open space resources that are known to improve personal mental and physical health. The benefits are partly offset by the City's ever-diminishing tree canopy coverage which, at 16%, is two-thirds the average coverage of other U.S. cities. Climate change compels us to restore our natural assets, particularly in communities with the most vulnerability to extreme heat and weather incidents, and protect and steward our freshwater resources for future generations.

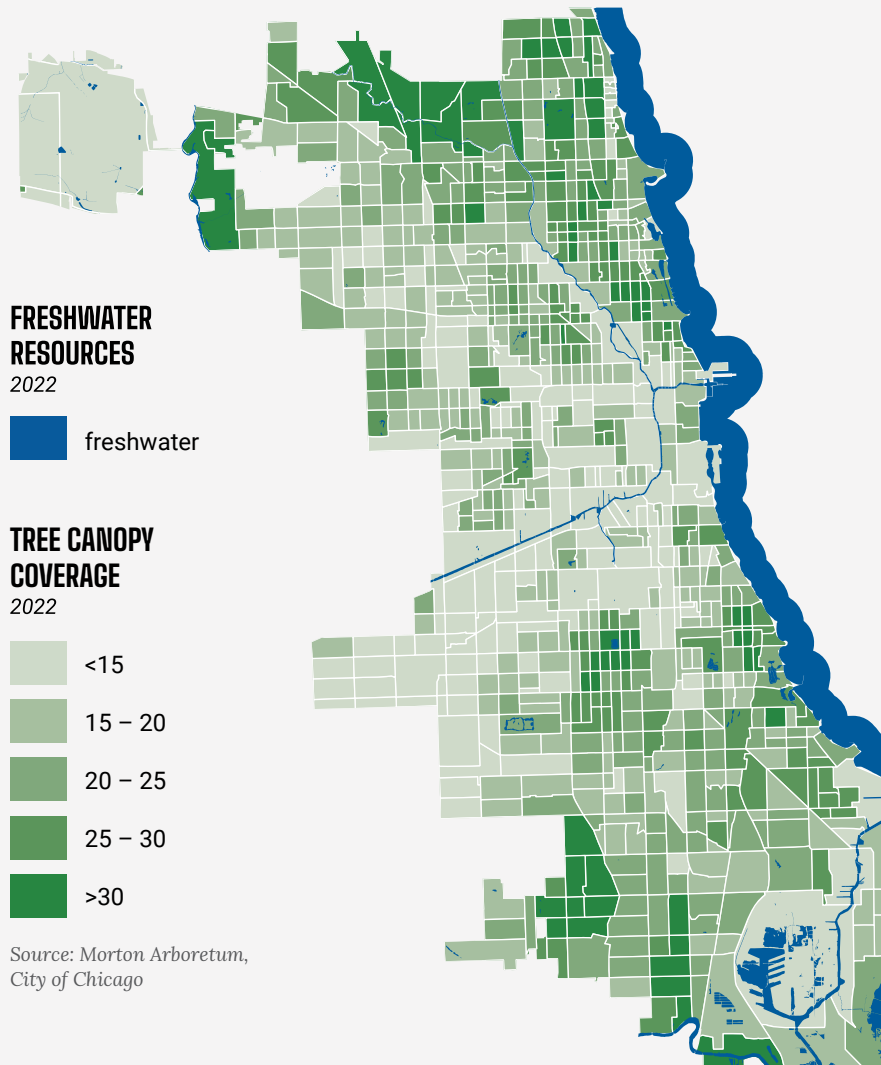
## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 4.1** Invest in land restoration and stewardship, especially in neighborhoods with existing environmental burdens.
- 4.2** Acquire open space and provide equitable and improved access across the city.
- 4.3** Maximize the use of native plants in preserves, parks and parkways.
- 4.4** Invest in the expansion of Chicago's urban tree canopy.
- 4.5** Create open space or corridor easements around industrial zones.
- 4.6** Require infrastructure to be designed and built sustainably with public access for people of all abilities.
- 4.7** Protect Chicago's freshwater resources as the climate changes.
- 4.8** Work with Native American leaders to protect and support indigenous land stewardship principles.

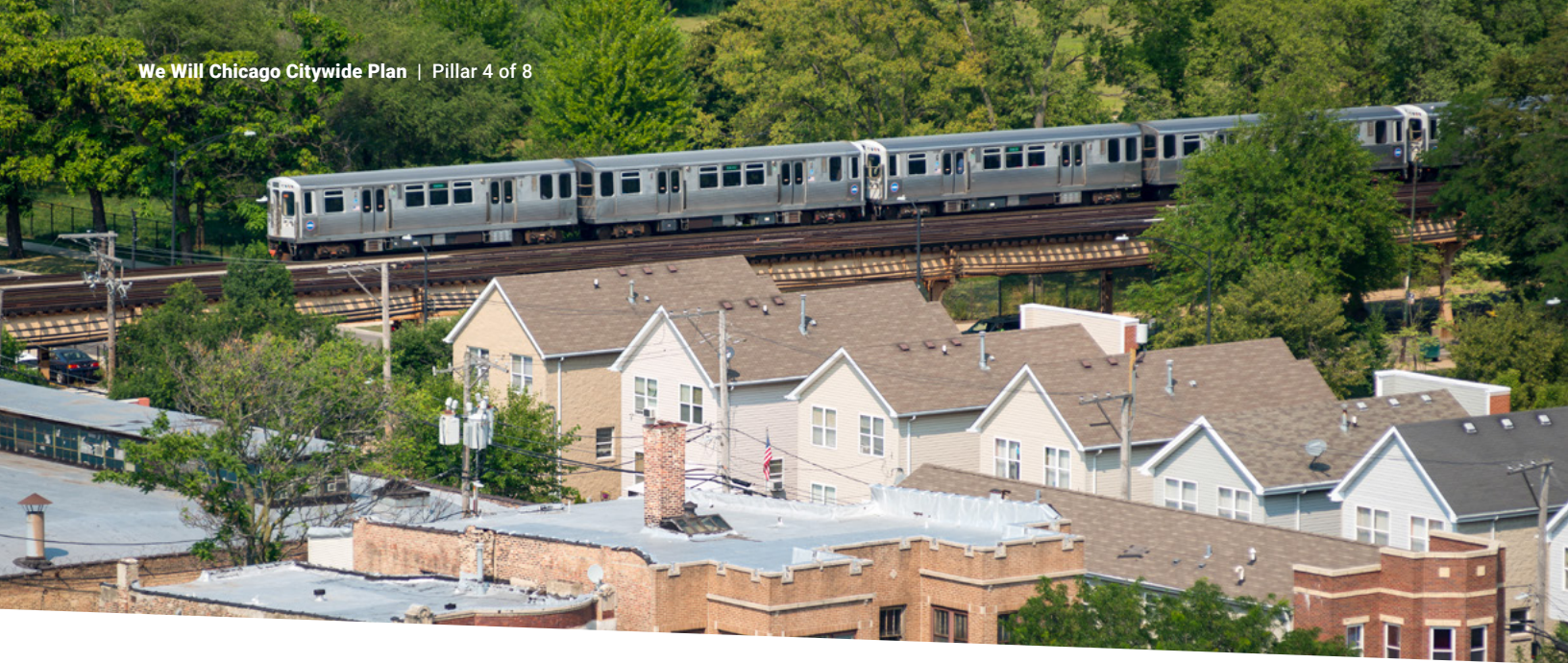
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Chicago's Freshwater Resources**



“ We also need to discuss bridging the gap between labor and environmental justice – that's a big issue for our group and probably many others here. ”

– Martha Torres Allen | Southeast Side Coalition to Ban Petcoke, Co-Chair



## GOAL 5

# Mitigate and eliminate sources of carbon emissions in alignment with state, national and global climate goals.

Because 70% of Chicago emissions come from buildings, focus should be on eliminating harmful fossil fuels, retrofitting existing buildings, designing new buildings to the highest efficiency standards, expanding renewable energy and implementing savings opportunities for cost-burdened households. Buildings should be designed to minimize their impacts and enable green infrastructure, native landscaping and trees to alleviate urban heat islands and flood damage. Finally, housing near transit should be equitably advanced to provide increased access and lower emissions from car trips.

## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

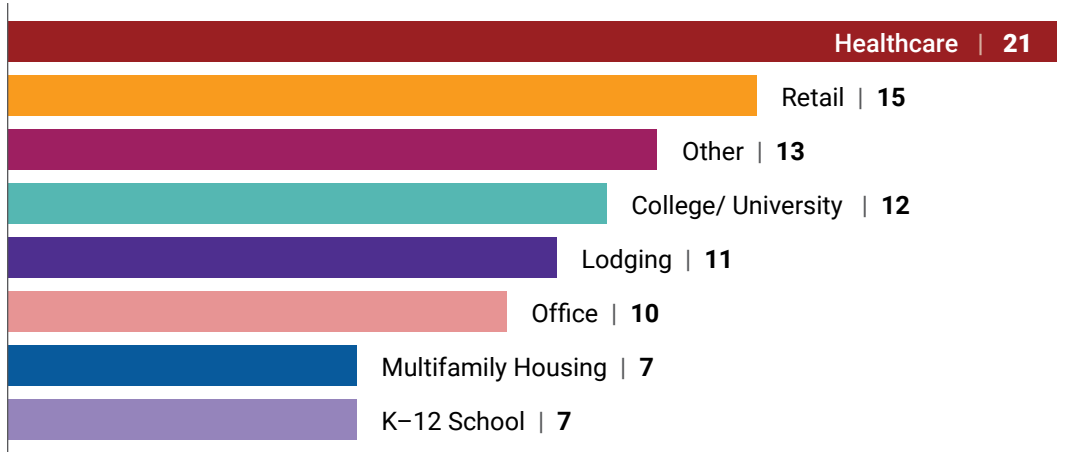
- 5.1** Significantly reduce the ongoing impact of climate change in our neighborhoods.
- 5.2** Plan for green infrastructure that reduces the overall carbon impact of the City in public and private development.
- 5.3** Expand transit infrastructure as a climate mitigation strategy, especially in Black, Latino and Native American communities.



**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Greenhouse gas emissions vary widely by building uses.**

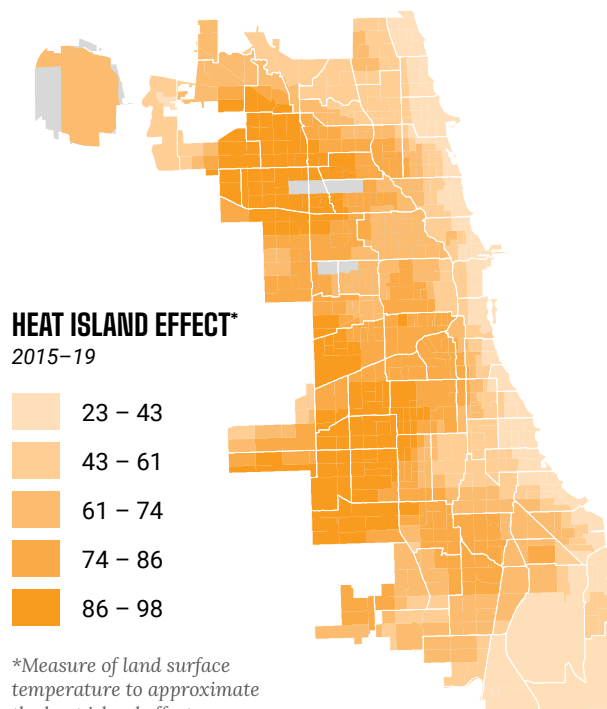
**MEDIAN GREENHOUSE GAS INTENSITY BY BUILDING USE**  
 2016–20, Chicago, GHG Emissions Intensity (kg CO<sub>2</sub>e/square foot)



Note: Other includes mixed use, convention and other public assembly, courthouse and prisons, laboratories, museums, libraries, adult educations and preschool/daycare.

Source: Chicago Energy Benchmarking Report, 2020

**Chicago's surface temperatures are highest on the Northwest and Southwest sides.**



\*Measure of land surface temperature to approximate the heat island effect.

Source: Compiled by the University of Chicago Healthy Regions and Policies Lab, with support from the Partnership for Healthy Cities in partnership with the University of Chicago Center for Spatial Data Science and the Chicago Department of Public Health

*“ I think if you institute a planning policy where natural areas and tree canopy has to be considered at either every population density or geographic distance, you’re going to address a lot of these issues that you’re talking about like heat island effect, flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, all of these things. ”*

*– Matt Freer* | Chicago Park District, Assistant Director of Landscape



To see the policy ideas developed by the **Environment, Climate & Energy** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)





  **WE WILL CHICAGO**

# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS

Ensuring that every Chicago neighborhood is safe, inclusive, and vibrant, has healthy, affordable and accessible housing, and connects residents to what they need to thrive

# HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS



**Chicagoans live in vastly different and segregated neighborhoods with disparate housing conditions, unequal amenities and uneven access to healthy food.**

Chicago’s Black-white homeownership gap is the largest among the nation’s 10 biggest metropolitan areas, according to the Urban Institute. Though most discriminatory housing practices have been outlawed, inequities continue due to insufficient enforcement, a history of disinvestment and legacies of unfair lending practices and other policies.



For example, 2019 mortgage denials for Chicago homes were twice as high for Black residents as for white residents, according to the Woodstock Institute, with fewer than 20% of mortgage loans between 2012 and 2018 going to majority Black and Latino communities, according to WBEZ. Many Chicagoans, especially in communities of color, face additional ongoing challenges including housing affordability – nearly 25% of households spend more than half their monthly income on housing – and food access, with 40% of Chicago parents living in community areas with limited access to grocery stores, according to recent studies. Approximately 60,000 Chicagoans also experience homelessness, including those doubled up.

The Housing & Neighborhood pillar’s goals are to ensure that every resident is able to live in a stable, quality home and that every neighborhood has diverse, affordable and accessible housing options with access to transit, well-paying jobs, an array of amenities and needed services.



## KEY TERMS

### Displacement

When existing residents and businesses can no longer afford rising housing costs in their neighborhood and are forced to move to another neighborhood.

### Gentrification

When neighborhood housing costs increase and neighborhood character changes due to the influx of new residents that are wealthier than existing residents.

### Historically Marginalized

Groups who have experienced discrimination and exclusion due to race, age, immigration status, income, family size, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, legal history or other statuses

“ If we want to ... stop repeating these cycles of ‘oh let’s look at this problem’ and apply a Band-Aid, we have to really get to the root cause ... that’s the only chance we have of truly eliminating the segregation, the disinvestment. But we have to be really brave to face those root causes. The data will not give us that, and those lived experiences will. ”

— Linda Young | Volunteer

## GOAL 1

# Preserve and increase affordable, quality and accessible housing choices for all.

Households burdened with high housing costs have less money for health care, food, transportation and other basic needs. Shifts in available housing impact residents across the city. From 2013 to 2019, new development has resulted in more than 23,000 units in large apartment buildings, yet nearly 12,000 units in two- and four- flats have been lost due to demolition or conversion to single-family homes. Likewise, as documented in the Chicago Blueprint for Fair Housing, households with disabilities face limited options for accessible housing with affordable rents and near accessible infrastructure.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

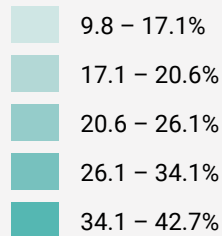
- 1.1** Preserve and maintain existing affordable housing across all 77 community areas.
- 1.2** Develop a wide range of housing units affordable to individuals and families at all incomes in all 77 community areas.
- 1.3** Expand housing assistance for marginalized residents, especially low-income residents, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- 1.4** Ensure housing is accessible for people with disabilities or can be adapted to meet their needs.



**SUPPORTING DATA**

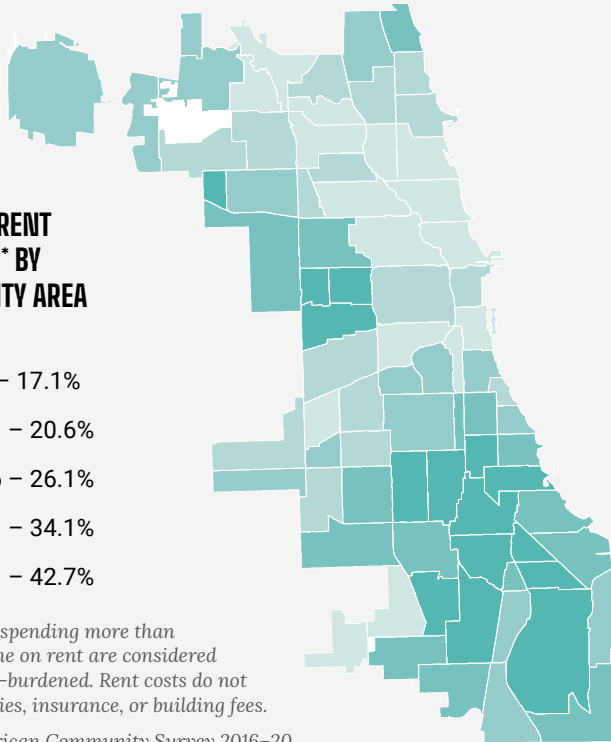
**Chicago's most rent-burdened households are concentrated on the South and West sides.**

**SEVERELY RENT BURDENED\* BY COMMUNITY AREA**  
2020

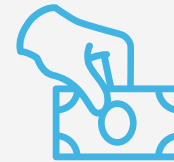


\*Households spending more than 50% of income on rent are considered severely rent-burdened. Rent costs do not include utilities, insurance, or building fees.

Source: American Community Survey 2016–20 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas.



In some community areas,  
**NEARLY 50%**  
of renters are severely  
rent-burdened



**Chicago continues to lose rental units in smaller buildings due to demolitions in lower-cost neighborhoods and conversions to single-family homes in higher-cost neighborhoods.**

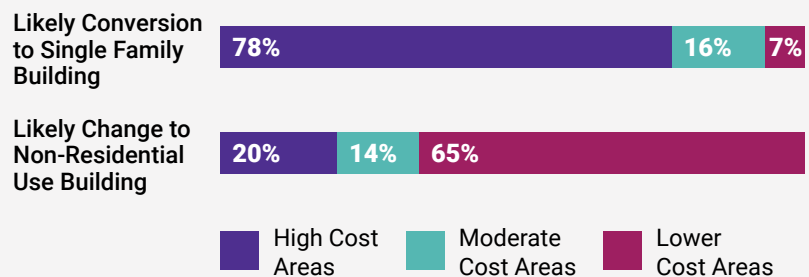
**CHANGE IN NUMBER OF RENTAL UNITS BY BUILDING TYPE**

2012–19, Chicago

BUILDING TYPES (RENTAL)	CHANGE (2012–19)
Single-Unit	-1,200
2–4 Units	-14,400
5–49 Units	-600
50+ Units	+23,300

**CHANGES IN 2–4 UNIT PROPERTIES BY NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET TYPE**

2013–19, Chicago



Source: Cook County Assessor, IHS Data Clearinghouse

Source: IHS at DePaul University, American Community Survey PUMS Data 1-Year, 2012–19



## GOAL 2

# Prevent Chicagoans from being involuntarily displaced, especially those that have been historically marginalized.

Rent and property tax increases, along with stagnant wages, are primary causes for the displacement of marginalized residents. In 2020, South and West Side community areas continued to have the lowest rates of new mortgage activity, pointing to the challenges that residents face in accessing homeownership and land ownership. Chicago's inequitable housing displacement trends are additionally reflected by eviction filings that are six times higher in majority-Black community areas and two times higher in majority-Latino areas than in majority-white areas.

## OBJECTIVES

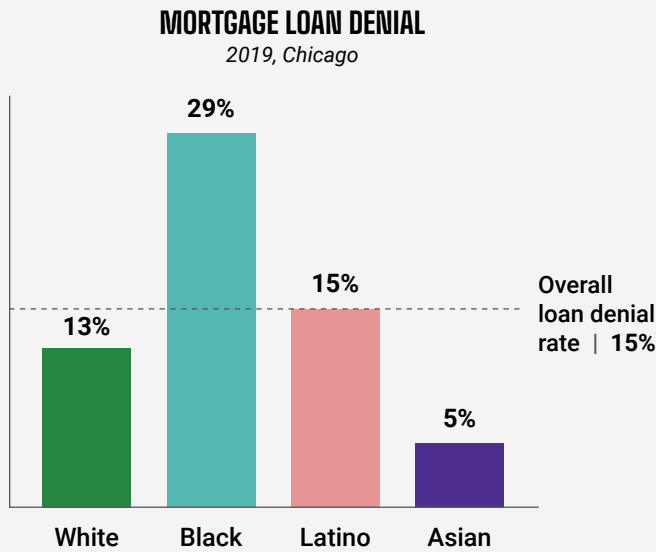
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 2.1** Support and increase homeownership for Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant residents.
- 2.2** Increase community ownership opportunities and options for Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant residents to collectively own land and properties.
- 2.3** Increase protections for residents and institutions in neighborhoods with rising rents and property values.



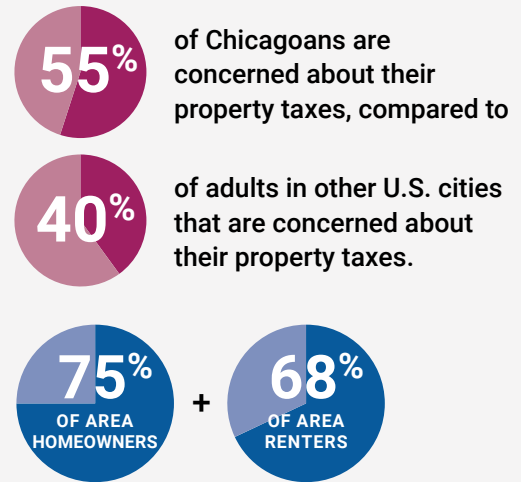
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Home purchase loan denials continue to be concentrated in Black and Latino neighborhoods.**



Source: Woodstock Institute, HMDA

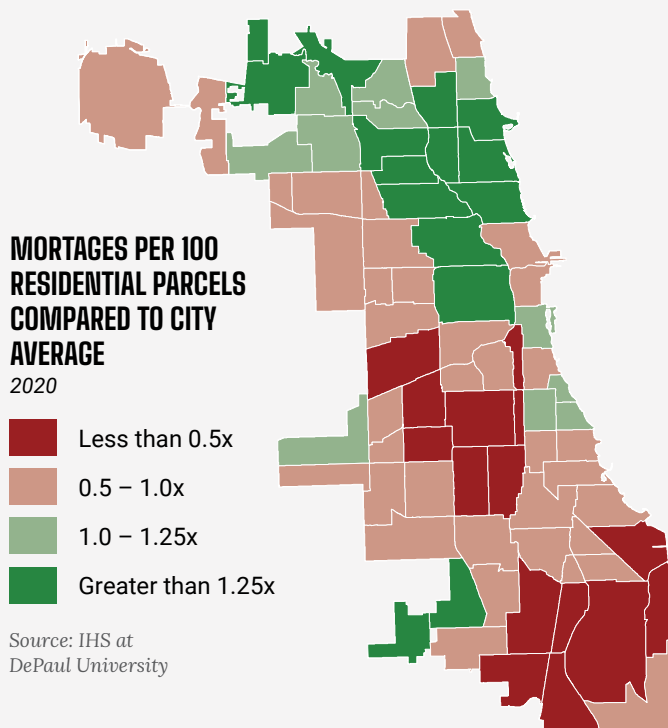
**Property taxes are a concern for renters and homeowners.**



believe Chicago property taxes are worse than other cities

Source: The Harris Poll

**North Side and Near West neighborhoods have the highest amount of mortgage lending activity.**



Source: IHS at DePaul University

**NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE HIGHEST MORTGAGE RATE COMPARED TO CITY AVERAGE**

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE
North Center	2.08x
West Town	2.01x
Logan Square	1.76x
Edison Park	1.66x
Forest Glen	1.57x

**NEIGHBORHOODS WITH THE LOWEST MORTGAGE RATE COMPARED TO CITY AVERAGE**

NEIGHBORHOOD	RATE
Riverdale	0.07x
South Deering	0.25x
West Englewood	0.26x
South Lawndale	0.35x
Fuller Park	0.35x



### GOAL 3

## Attract and retain residents and increase density to strengthen neighborhood vibrancy, especially on the South and West sides.

Many aspects of a neighborhood’s desirability are proportionate to its population and density. During the 1950s, discriminatory housing practices and disinvestment contributed to Chicago’s loss of nearly 1 million residents. This has resulted in less neighborhood vitality and more abandoned or distressed properties—including 10,000 vacant city-owned lots heavily concentrated in majority Black communities. Other practices also limit opportunities for inclusive neighborhood growth and affordability and reinforce racial and socioeconomic segregation. According to a 2019 New York Times analysis, 79% of Chicago’s residential land is zoned for detached single-family homes.

### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 3.1** Update the City’s rules and regulations to support increased equitable development.
- 3.2** Focus future growth and density in and around transit hubs, key commercial corridors and/or anchors.
- 3.3** Prioritize redevelopment of vacant land and buildings.
- 3.4** Create, strengthen and anchor neighborhood-based developers, including those that are small or medium sized and led by Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant owners.
- 3.5** Enhance public spaces, schools, parks, services and public infrastructure in underserved communities.


**SUPPORTING DATA**

“ I have seen lots of rundown homes on the South and West sides and people are living there because that’s what they can afford. I’d love to see homes that people can live in with dignity, in neighborhoods that have well-funded schools and where children can play safely. We need to be safe in our neighborhoods. ”

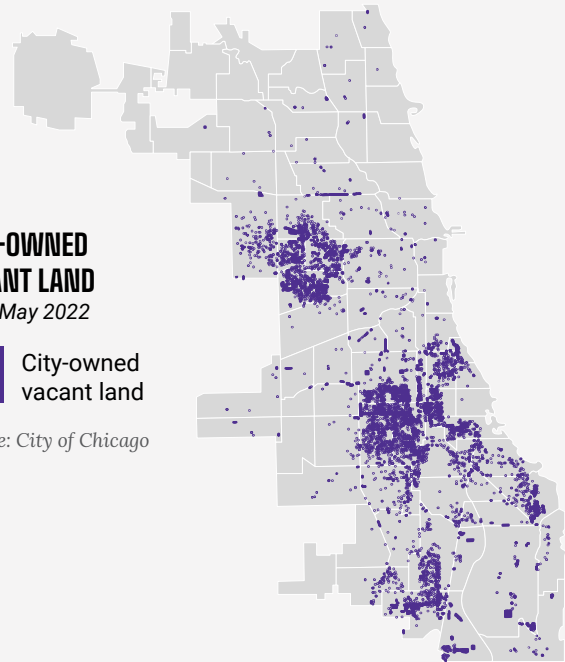
— *Chevon* | East Lakeview

**The City of Chicago owns more than 10,000 vacant lots.**

**CITY-OWNED VACANT LAND**  
as of May 2022






 City-owned vacant land

Source: City of Chicago

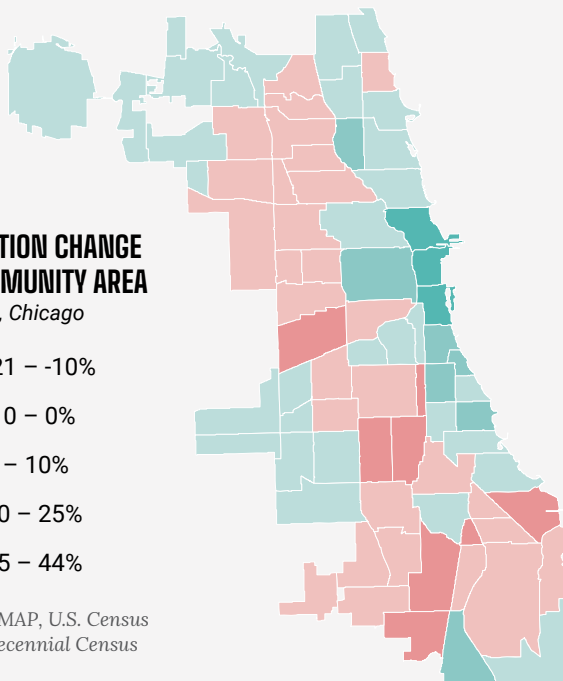


**Nearly half of Chicago's community areas lost population in the previous decade.**

**POPULATION CHANGE BY COMMUNITY AREA**  
2010–20, Chicago

 -21 – -10%  
 -10 – 0%  
 0 – 10%  
 10 – 25%  
 25 – 44%

Source: CMAP, U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census



**COMMUNITY AREAS WITH THE MOST POPULATION CHANGE**  
2010–20, Chicago

COMMUNITY AREA	POPULATION CHANGE
Englewood	-20.50%
West Englewood	-16.50%
Burnside	-13.34%
Roseland	-13.01%
Near West Side	+23.69%
Near North Side	+31.06%
Near South Side	+34.62%
The Loop	+44.45%

## GOAL 4

# Invest in Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant communities to create safe, healthy and livable neighborhoods that provide basic needs, amenities, services and jobs.

Black, Latino and Asian residents are less likely to report feeling like a part of their neighborhoods than white residents, according to data collected from the Healthy Chicago Survey. These sentiments are likely due in part to diminished retail corridors, recent school closures, limited access to healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food options and a history of disinvestment and exclusion, among other causes.

### OBJECTIVES

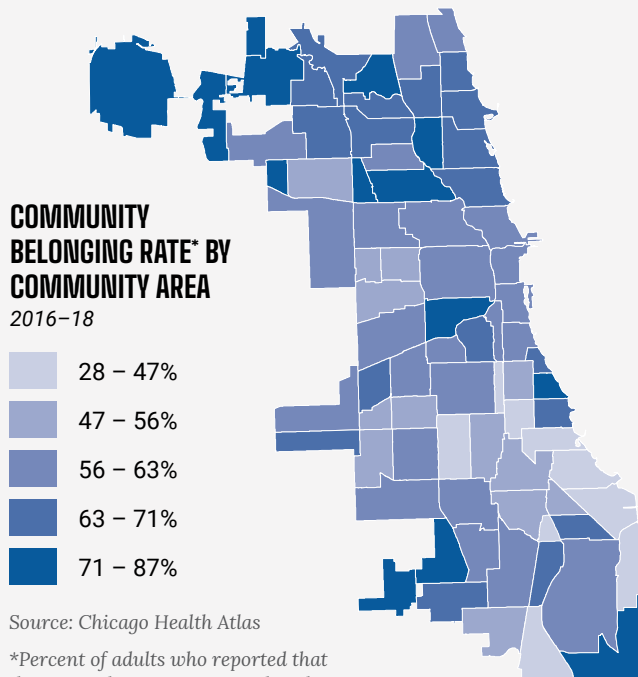
To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 4.1** Increase access to healthy food and health care in Black, Latino, Native American, Asian and immigrant communities.
- 4.2** Support existing and grow new locally-owned neighborhood businesses.
- 4.3** Create a welcoming environment to foster a stronger sense of belonging in all 77 community areas, especially for youth and older residents.
- 4.4** Strengthen community-based organizations in all 77 community areas.



**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Feeling of community belonging varies widely by community area.**



Source: Chicago Health Atlas

\*Percent of adults who reported that they strongly agree or agree that they really feel part of their neighborhood.

**COMMUNITY BELONGING RATE**  
2020, Chicago

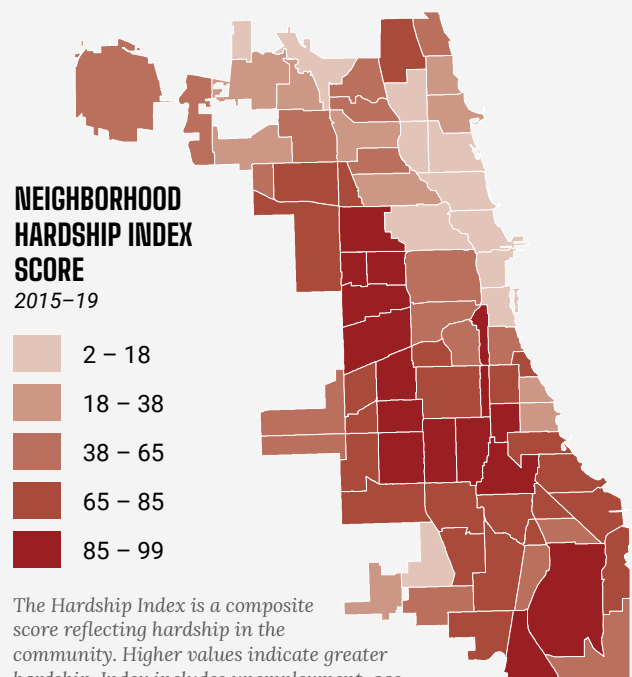
RACE OR ETHNICITY	RATE
White	51%
Black	46%
Asian	40%
Latino	42%
<b>Citywide Average</b>	<b>46%</b>

Source: Chicago Health Atlas, 2020

“ We have to think about preservation. More times than not when we get a new building, we get new neighbors. There’s always a question of what happened to the families that were already there. ”

— *Dalia Aragon* | North River Commission, Economic Development and Housing Coordinator

**Long-term disinvestment has led to high levels of hardship, especially on the South and West sides.**



The Hardship Index is a composite score reflecting hardship in the community. Higher values indicate greater hardship. Index includes unemployment, age dependency, education, per capita income, crowded housing, and poverty

Source: Chicago Health Atlas



*“ What I imagine for housing in the future... one of the things I regret not having on the South side is green space. Build up green space and build up community gardens, that’s one of the things that I’d like to have in homes and in the community. ”*

*— Melissa* | East Garfield Park

To see the policy ideas developed by the **Housing & Neighborhood** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)





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# LIFELONG LEARNING

Ensuring that learning opportunities  
exist for Chicagoans at every  
stage of life



# LIFELONG LEARNING

**Learning that lasts a lifetime helps people to continually improve themselves for work, recreation and other personal or social pursuits that contribute to strong communities.**

With approximately two-thirds of Illinois jobs reportedly requiring at least some post-secondary schooling or special training, formal education is a key predictor for an individual’s income potential. College graduates, for example, reportedly earn 65% more on average than high school graduates. Increased access to educational and learning opportunities is also strongly correlated to improved community health outcomes.

Lifelong learning enables Chicagoans to set and reach goals for themselves and their families, which strengthens the vitality of entire neighborhoods. Through formal and informal learning, in a variety of formats and locations that cater to the unique needs of residents, Chicagoans can unlock talents and skills, learn from collective history and prepare future generations to be change-makers for a more resilient and equitable city.

The Lifelong Learning pillar’s goals seek to improve educational attainment, paying particular attention to addressing educational inequities, and to strengthen pathways to workforce opportunities.







## KEY TERMS

### Digitalization

The conversion of text, images, sound and other information into a digital format that can be processed by computers.

### Formal and Informal Learning

Educational activity resulting from attendance at formal schools and institutions with established programming, as well as experiences attained through social endeavors, hobbies, activities, personal pursuits and other casual endeavors that enhance personal awareness, knowledge and ability.

### Intergenerational Encounters

Opportunities for individuals of different generations or ages to come together.

### Postsecondary Education

All formal education, including technical training and vocational programs with degree and non-degrees that lead to certificates and diplomas that foster individual growth, career pathways that reduce poverty, and increase prosperity.

*“ I don’t think any positive change in the city is possible without equal, fair access to higher learning. Education is the first platform in knowing how to determine what is healthy and unhealthy. ”*

– Kilroy Watkins | West Side of Chicago

## GOAL 1

# Support increased awareness, interest and belonging to learning resources accessible to all Chicagoans at all stages of life regardless of race, gender, income level, age, ability, citizenship status and language proficiency.

Educational services provided by Chicago's many public and private institutions would benefit from increased coordination that addresses the city's evolving workforce needs and the diverse interests of residents.

## OBJECTIVES

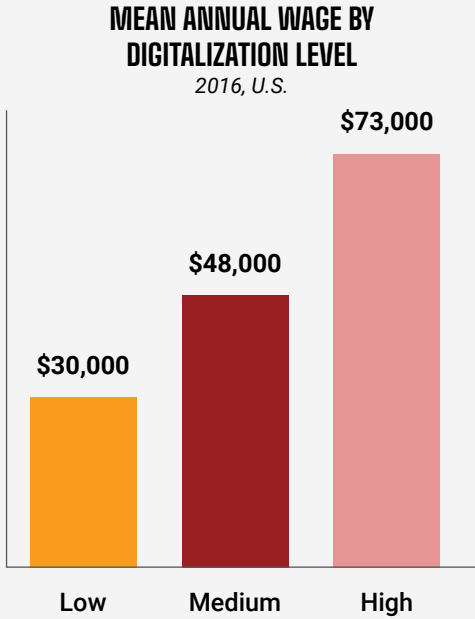
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 1.1** Create a structure within City government to improve collaboration between citywide education-focused organizations and share learning opportunities available to the public.
- 1.2** Leverage informal learning to create pathways toward more formal educational opportunities.
- 1.3** Develop an accessible citywide awareness campaign to promote the importance of and opportunities for lifelong learning.

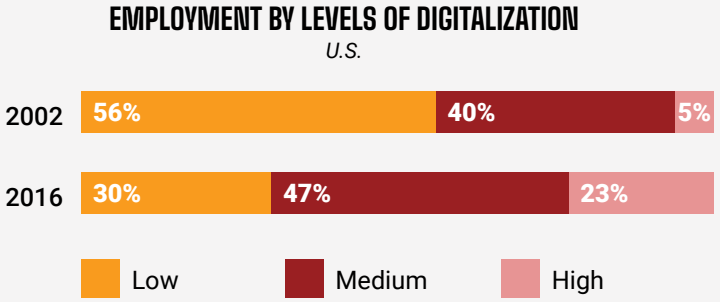


SUPPORTING DATA

Digital skills continue to correlate with expanded employment options and higher wage levels.



Source: Information Technology and Innovation Foundation

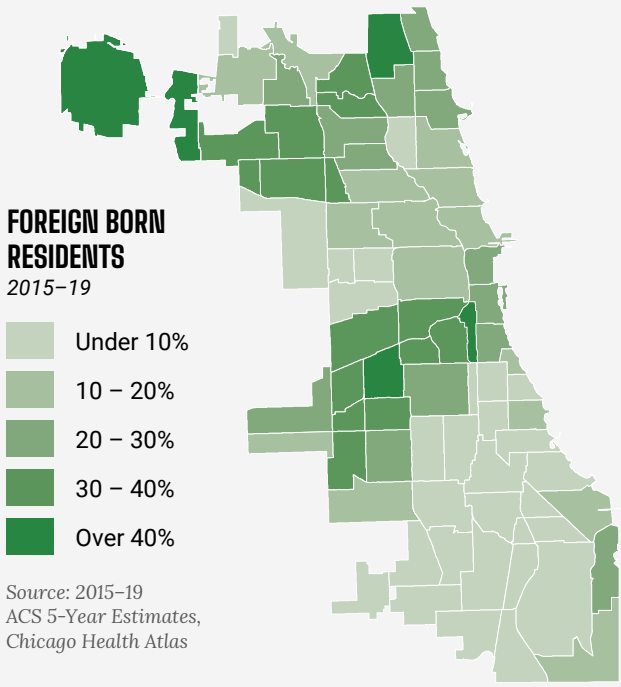


**1 IN 3**  
working-age Americans possess limited digital skills.



**1 IN 6**  
working-age Americans are unable to use email, web search and other basic online tools.

Many Chicagoans have limited English proficiency.



Source: 2015-19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

**21%** of Chicago residents are foreign born.



**8%** of Chicago residents have limited English proficiency.\*

\*"Limited English proficiency" is defined as residents 5 years and older who do not speak English "very well"



## GOAL 2

# Create new sustainable educational pathways to the workforce, especially for Black, Latino and Native American residents and those negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.

In 2017, more than 25% of Black youth and about 13% of Latino youth between the ages of 16–24 were out of work and out of school, compared to 5% of white youth, according to the Great Cities Institute. Unemployment rates for formerly incarcerated individuals is five times the rate of people who have never been to jail or prison, a Prison Policy Initiative report found.

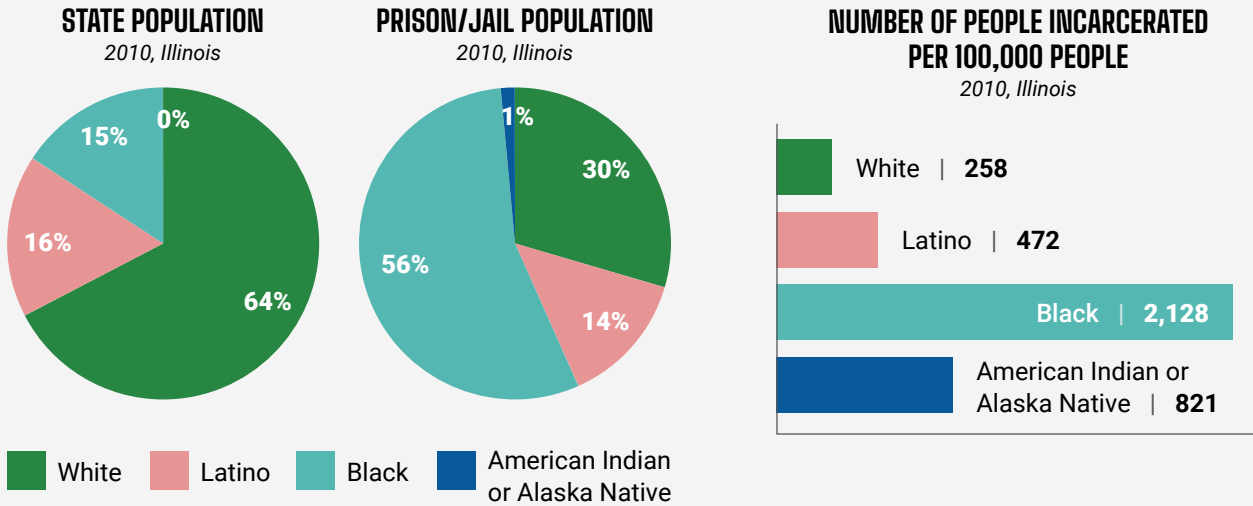
### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 2.1** Strengthen and expand job training programs that provide employment opportunities after completion.
- 2.2** Strengthen the capacity of workforce training programs and partnerships for people negatively affected by the criminal-legal system.
- 2.3** Remove barriers and constraints to participating in the workforce and accessing good quality jobs.
- 2.4** Align educational providers and key employers to create well-supported workforce pipelines.
- 2.5** Reduce the financial burden of participating in workforce training programs.
- 2.6** Expand equitable access to small business development, incubation and other business-led learning opportunities.

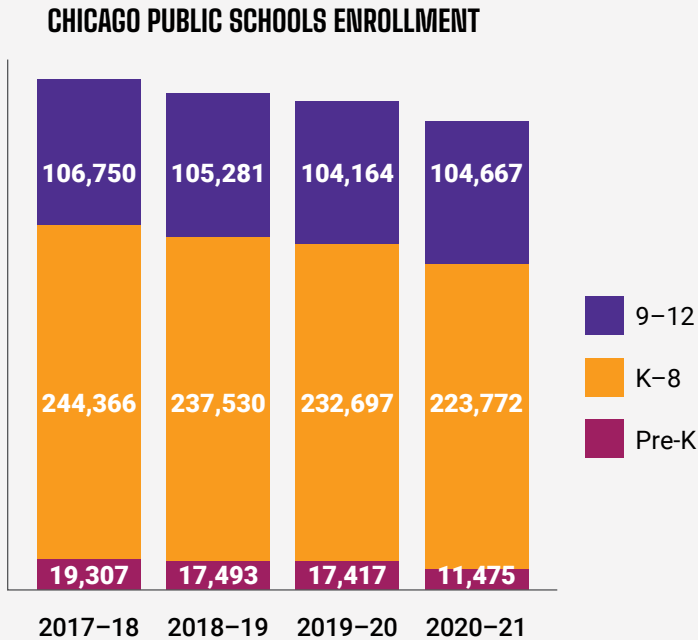
SUPPORTING DATA

Illinois prisons disproportionately house Black inmates.



Source: Prison Policy Initiative, Illinois State Profile

CPS enrollment has declined for all age levels since 2017.



Source: Chicago Public Schools ARA Dashboard

“ While we are talking about job readiness and training, are we also talking about job availability, specifically those with a living wage? I’m just curious about placement and career sustainability after the formal and informal pathways have been taken. ”

— Rebecca Amato | Illinois Humanities, Director of Teaching and Learning

## GOAL 3

# Build on existing programs to create opportunities for learning and personal growth.

Initiatives to support students with postsecondary educational plans can help reduce racial disparities involving high school and college graduation rates, especially through collaborations with community-based organizations that are already providing social services to future and current workforce members.

## OBJECTIVES

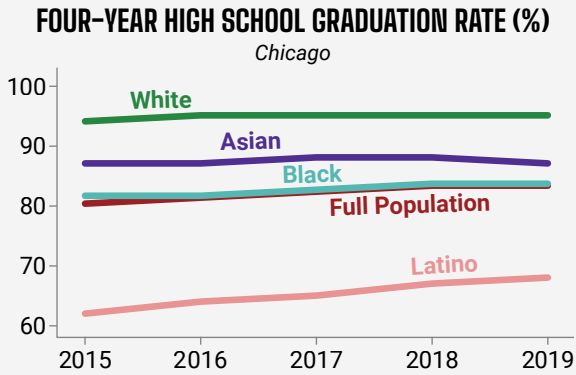
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 3.1** Identify effective programs throughout the City and expand access to all neighborhoods.
- 3.2** Sustain and expand the work of programs and programming in Black, immigrant, Indigenous, Latino and low-income communities.
- 3.3** Expand existing programs to accommodate individuals across the lifespan and with different abilities.
- 3.4** Bridge the reach and impact of collaborations between Chicago Public Schools and higher education programs.

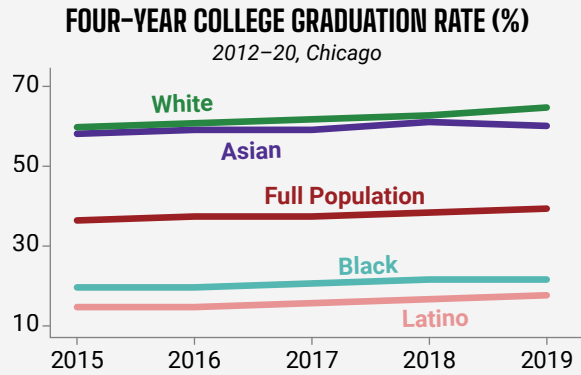


SUPPORTING DATA

The graduation rates of Chicago students decreases more than 50% between high school and college.



Source: 2015–19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

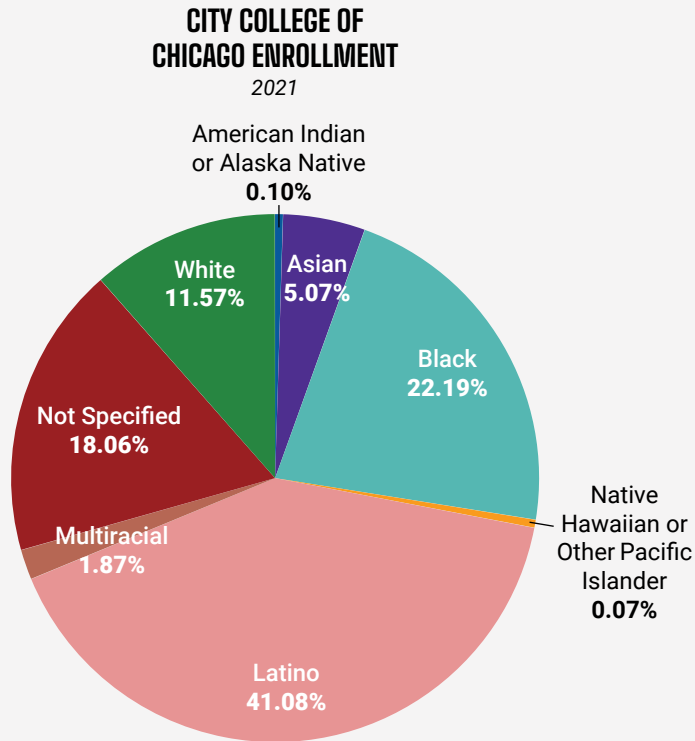


Source: 2015–19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

“ We really ought to be calling out specifically our commitment to public education in our objectives and naming CPS as a critical institution in the city as a provider of lifelong learning. ”

– Mark Potter | City Colleges of Chicago, Provost and Chief Academic Officer

Chicago City Colleges enrollment reflects the city's racial and ethnic diversity.



Source: City Colleges of Chicago

## GOAL 4

# Elevate existing support systems to increase formal and informal learning opportunities.

Single parents, seniors, recent immigrants and people with disabilities can all benefit from multiple supportive resources that improve their abilities to pursue education and training.

### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

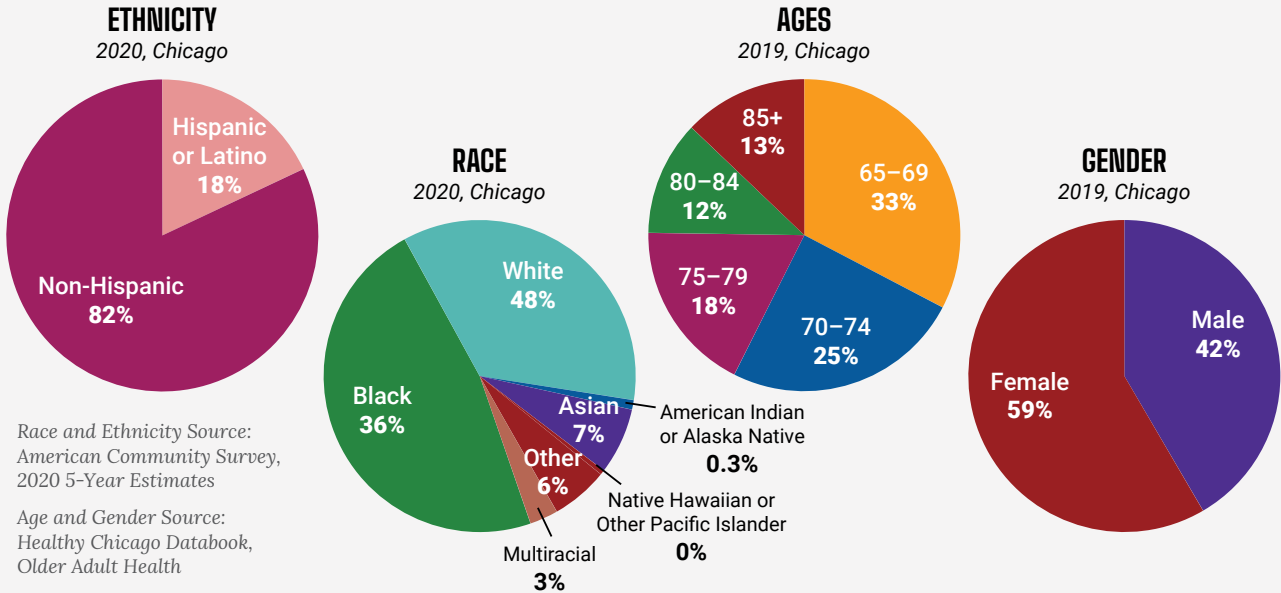
- 4.1** Promote and strengthen opportunities for intergenerational encounters to build skills and building community.
- 4.2** Increase support for and remove barriers to accessing childcare and older adult care.
- 4.3** Address inequities in pay and resources for educators and care professionals.





**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Demographics of Chicago residents aged 65 years or more**



**Many communities' single-parent households are at least three times city averages.**

**Select communities' preschool enrollment rates are a fraction of city averages.**

**SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLDS BY CITY AREA**  
2015-19, Chicago

**PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY CITY AREA**  
2015-19, Chicago

AREA	SINGLE-PARENT HOUSEHOLD (%)
Riverdale	36%
Washington Park	25%
Oakland	24%
Greater Grand Crossing	24%
South Deering	23%
West Garfield Park	22%
North Lawndale	22%
East Garfield Park	20%
Humboldt Park	17%
South Chicago	17%
<b>City of Chicago Average</b>	<b>7%</b>

AREA	PRESCHOOL ENROLLMENT (%)
Avalon Park	19%
West Lawn	25%
West Elsdon	27%
Hegewisch	32%
Archer Heights	34%
Gage Park	37%
Hermosa	37%
Auburn Gresham	38%
Brighton Park	40%
Englewood	40%
<b>City of Chicago Average</b>	<b>58%</b>

Source: 2015-19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas

Source: 2015-19 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Chicago Health Atlas



## GOAL 5

# Expand the availability and access to spaces for lifelong learning in Black, immigrant, Native American and Latino communities.

Nearly 20% of Chicago's 77 community areas don't have a public high school, according to the location of current CPS schools. The collective population of the impacted neighborhoods consists of nearly a quarter million people. This lack of access is most pronounced in the West and South sides where school closures in the 2010s deepened existing inequities.

### OBJECTIVES


*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 5.1** Ensure all K–12 schools can support opportunities for equitable, effective, rigorous and joyful learning, especially in communities affected by school closures.
- 5.2** Direct investments to facilities and organizations where inequitable access to lifelong learning facilities currently exist.
- 5.3** Create and support intergenerational community learning hubs in all neighborhoods.
- 5.4** Design learning environments to meet the needs of all residents, prioritizing language access and accessibility for those with disabilities.
- 5.5** Reduce financial and technology barriers to accessing community and educational programs.

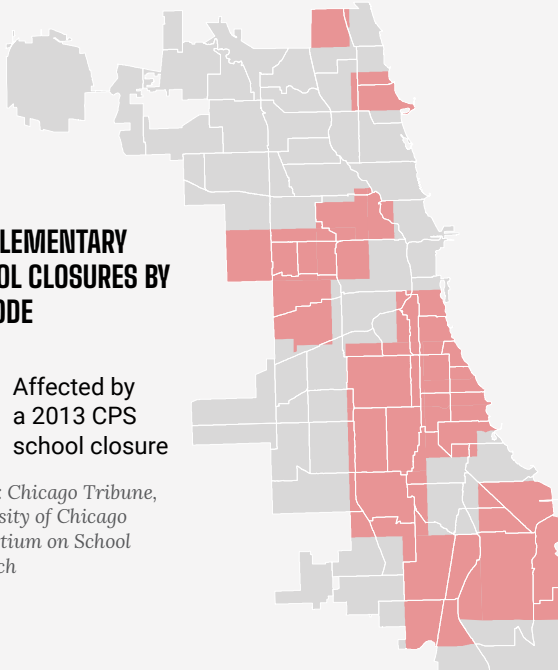
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**49 school closures in 2013 largely occurred on the South and West sides.**

**CPS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLOSURES BY ZIP CODE**  
2013

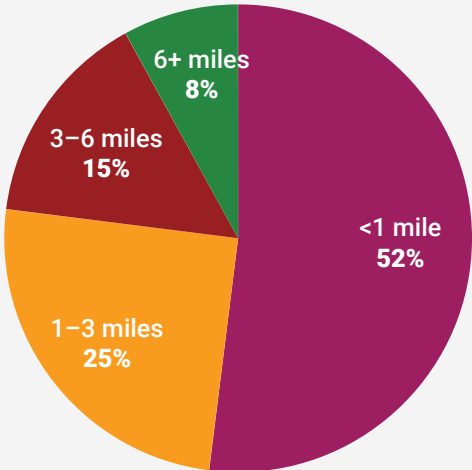
 Affected by a 2013 CPS school closure

Source: Chicago Tribune, University of Chicago Consortium on School Research



**More than 25,000 public school students travel 6+ miles to attend classes.**

**CPS STUDENT DISTANCE TO SCHOOL**  
2020-21



Source: Chicago Public Schools ARA Dashboard





*“ It’s not that there are no [learning] opportunities, it’s that folks don’t know how to plug in. [They] don’t know how to get connected to them. We also saw a lot that folks were not connected to each other, to other organizations, to other folks doing similar work, or that they were not being connected to civic entities or other municipality resources and opportunities. ”*

*— Quenna Lené Barrett | Goodman Theatre, Associate Director of Education*

To see the policy ideas developed by the **Lifelong Learning** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)



PILLAR 7 OF 8



■ ★ WE WILL CHICAGO

# PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

Honoring the intrinsic value of human lives by promoting equity in health and safety

■ ★ CHICAGO  
MAYOR LORI E. LIGHTFOOT

[wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)

# PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY



**Public health and safety are essential for all Chicagoans to feel protected and cared for as individuals and as a cohesive community.**

Structural racism and other systems of oppression are the root causes of Chicago's gaping health inequities, including inequities based on gender and income. Health inequities are the systematic differences in health status and outcomes across populations that are unfair, unjust and remediable.

Life expectancy for Black Chicagoans is 10 years shorter than white residents, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health. Every year, thousands of Chicagoans die earlier than they would if there were no health inequities, which exist across virtually all disease categories. The inequities persist for violence-related deaths, especially involving the city's pervasive gun

violence. Thousands of violent incidents every year result in hundreds of deaths and injuries, as well as trauma for individuals and communities. Black Chicagoans in their late teens are especially impacted by death by homicide, with rates as much as 10 times greater than city averages, according to a recent Northwestern Institute for Policy Research study. Immigrant Chicagoans also face particular challenges due to lack of access to healthcare and little familiarity with how health and safety systems work.

The Public Health and Safety pillar's goals are intended to reduce threats to physical and mental health, prioritize public health and contribute to the elimination of inequities in both health and safety by making health equity a top priority for the City of Chicago.



*Health inequities exist across disease categories and in broad measures such as life expectancy. The Chicago Health Atlas displays data in charts and maps of many of the health inequities in Chicago and is available at [chicagohealthatlas.org](http://chicagohealthatlas.org).*



## KEY TERMS

### Health Equity

An outcome achieved when every person can attain their full health potential without being oppressed or intentionally excluded because of social position. Health inequities are systematic differences in health status and outcomes across populations that are unfair, unjust and remediable.

### Trauma-Informed Approach

Recognizes the many symptoms of trauma and its widespread impact and responds with appropriate policies and procedures that simultaneously serve to prevent re-traumatization.

“ There needs to be more investment in health equity. That’s something that really concerns me, the changes in life expectancy over the course of a 20-minute drive in Chicago. ”

– *Jadelyn Rand* | Austin





## GOAL 1

# Ensure equitable, affordable healthcare services for all Chicagoans.

Access to affordable healthcare is particularly challenging for individuals without insurance. Approximately 10% of Chicago residents lived without health insurance in recent years, with uninsured Latino residents reaching nearly 17%. Even among the insured, healthcare inequities persist among population groups. For example, from 2018–20, less than 65% of pregnant Black women received prenatal care during their first trimester, while nearly 80% of white women did.

## OBJECTIVES

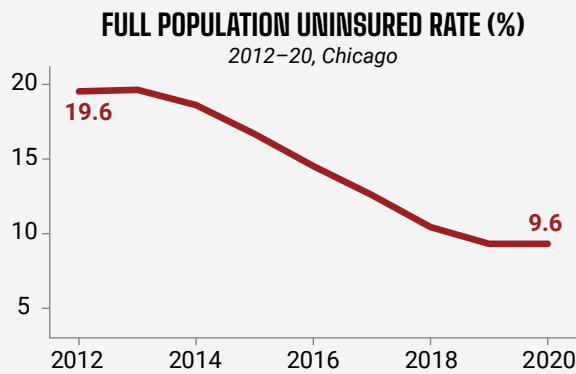
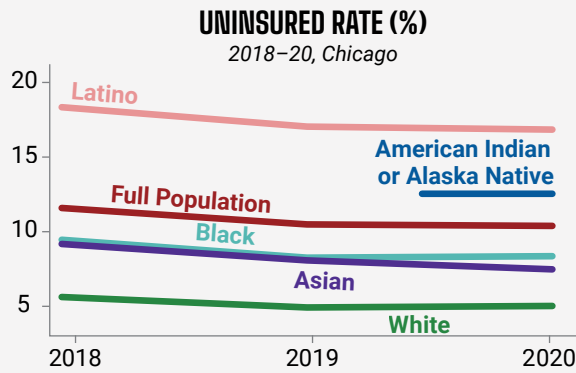
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 1.1** Ensure access to affordable high-quality, physical, mental health, and substance use health services.
- 1.2** Make all health, public and social services trauma-informed and culturally responsive.
- 1.3** Encourage and provide support for Black, Latino and Native American people to pursue health careers.
- 1.4** Ensure every Chicagoan has affordable and high-quality health insurance coverage.
- 1.5** Make healthcare institutions gateways to other services, resources and supports.



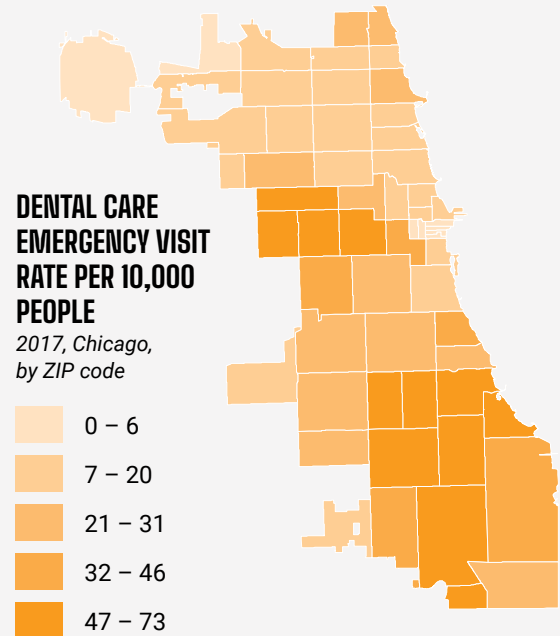
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Almost 10% of Chicagoans were uninsured in 2020.**



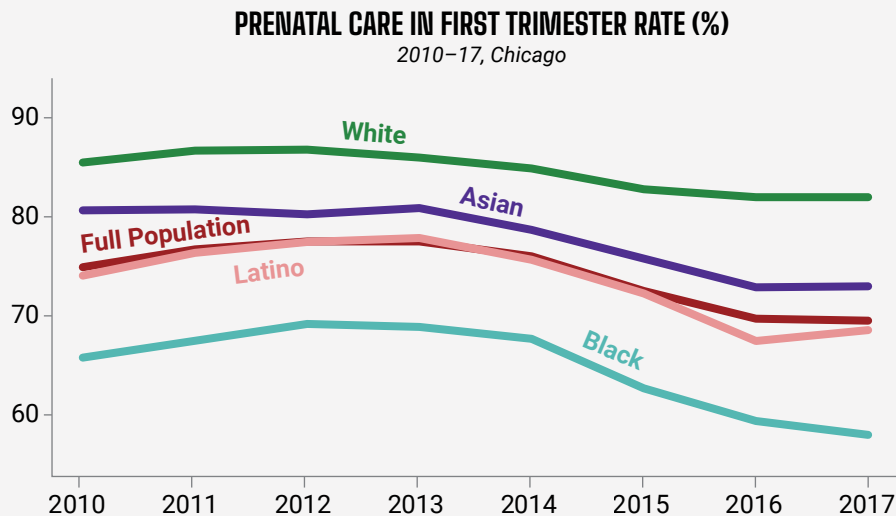
Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

**The rate of dental care emergencies reflects broader health care inequities citywide.**



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Illinois Department of Public Health, Hospital Discharge Data

**Prenatal care declined for all population groups for much of the last decade.**



Black residents received prenatal care in the first trimester

**24% LESS**

than white residents in 2017.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Illinois Department of Public Health, Birth Certificate Data Files

## GOAL 2

# Strengthen trauma-informed public health systems to respond to mental and behavioral health conditions.

Mental health conditions and substance use are public health issues that require compassionate, trauma-informed responses from public health systems. Opioid-related deaths, behavioral health-related hospitalizations and symptoms of depression disproportionately impact Black and Asian American or Pacific Islander residents more than white Chicagoans, according to the Chicago Department of Public Health.

### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

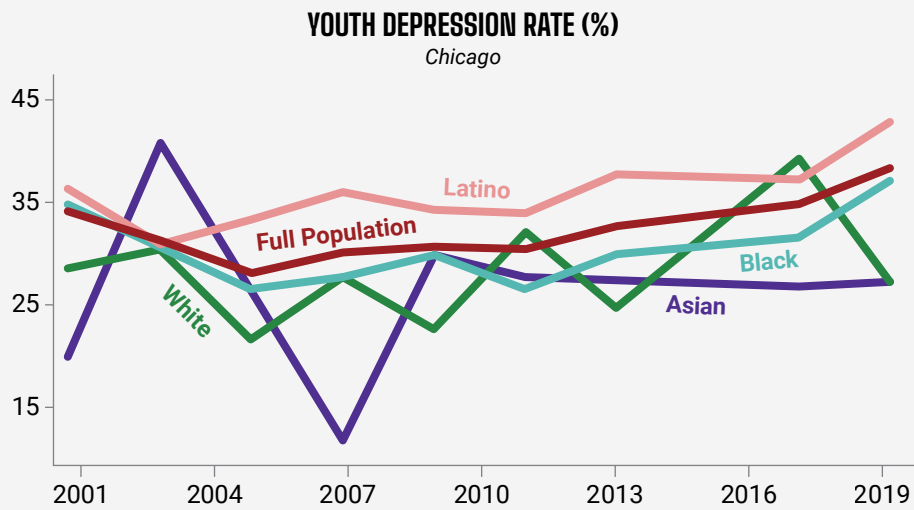
**2.1** Expand and increase access, resources and intentionally-designed physical and programmed spaces for harm reduction, safe drug use and recovery.

**2.2** Expand and strengthen a public health workforce to respond to behavioral, socio-economic, mental health and violence problems.

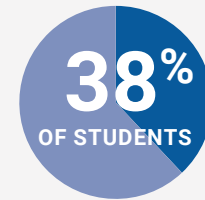


**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Youth depression is a significant health issue for multiple population groups.**



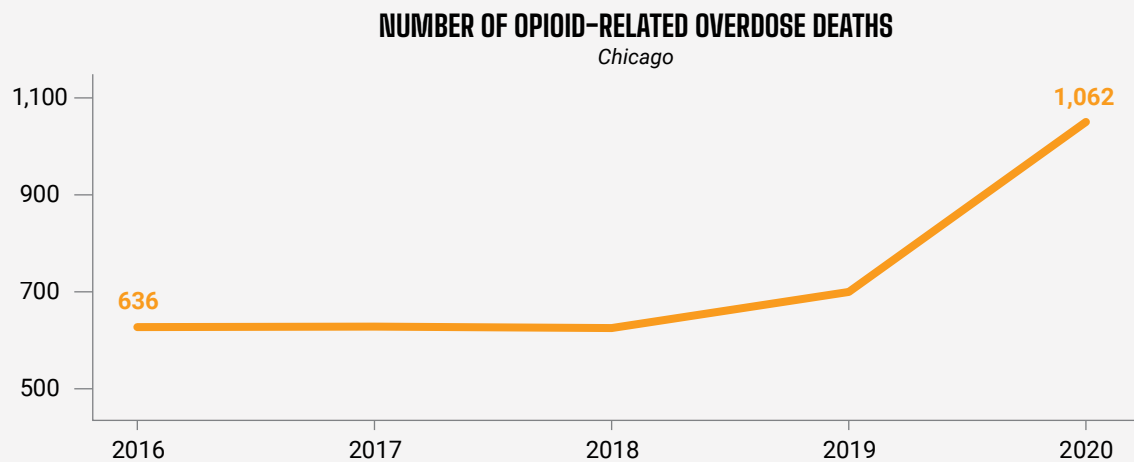
Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Youth Risk Behavior Survey



report feeling so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that they stopped doing usual activities.



**Opioid-related deaths have nearly doubled in recent years.**



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Cook County Medical Examiner



### GOAL 3

**Establish and maintain the necessary governmental public health and emergency management capacity, staff and infrastructure, and change community conditions to eliminate health inequities and respond to public health emergencies.**

Prior to COVID-19, government funding for public health initiatives steadily decreased nationwide in recent decades by nearly 20% resulting in reduced public resources for the public health system, according to a Kaiser Health News and Associated Press study. Chicago's future budgeting priorities should calculate the costs of current health inequities, future public health emergencies and the ongoing impact of the climate emergency, especially on residents who have fewer resources.

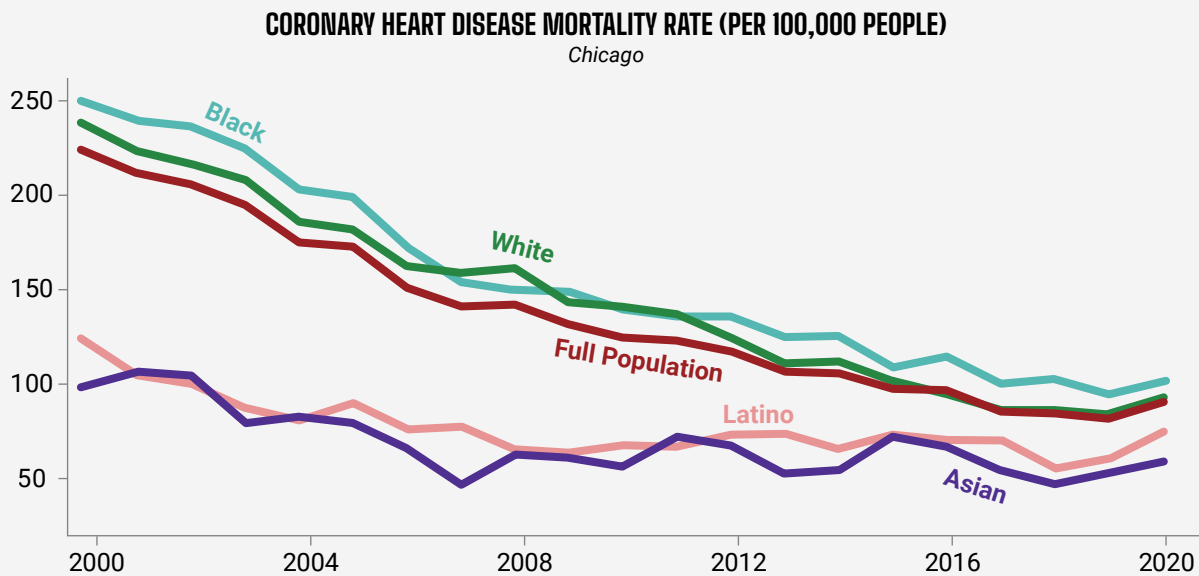
#### OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 3.1** Expand and sustain flexible public funding for City public health staff and infrastructure.
- 3.2** Expand and sustain flexible public funding for government and community health initiatives.
- 3.3** Partner City agencies with community organizations to better meet people's unmet health needs.
- 3.4** Ensure access to sufficient nourishing, culturally relevant and affordable foods.
- 3.5** Support the health of babies, children and parents and other caregivers.

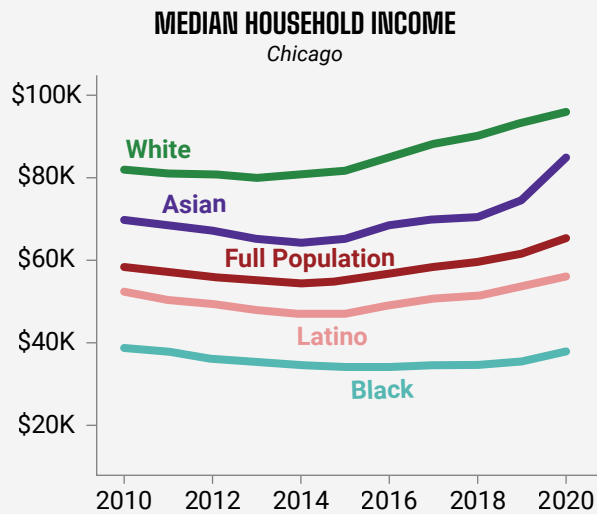
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Chicago's heart disease rates declined by half over a 20-year period.**



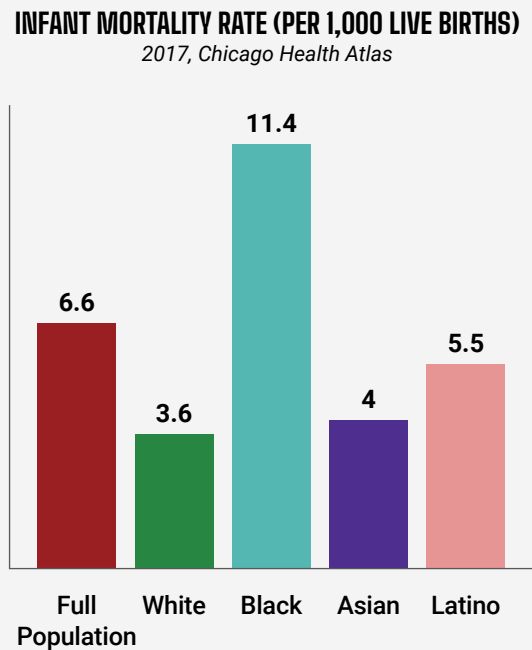
Source: Chicago Health Atlas, Illinois Department of Health, Death Certificate Data Files

**Household income is a contributing factor to race-related health disparities.**



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

**The mortality rate of Black infants is three times higher than white infants.**



Source: Chicago Health Atlas

## GOAL 4

# Ensure Chicago is a city where everyone can thrive without fear of violence.

Chicago's pervasive violence has caused residents of all races to feel less secure in their neighborhoods. According to an annual survey by the Chicago Department of Public Health, between 2015 and 2021, the rate of Black residents reporting a sense of safety in their neighborhoods dropped more than 20%. The sense of safety rate dropped nearly 20% for Latino residents, 11% for white residents and 3% for Asian residents. Inequity in exposure to violence is one health inequity among many public health problems citywide.

## OBJECTIVES

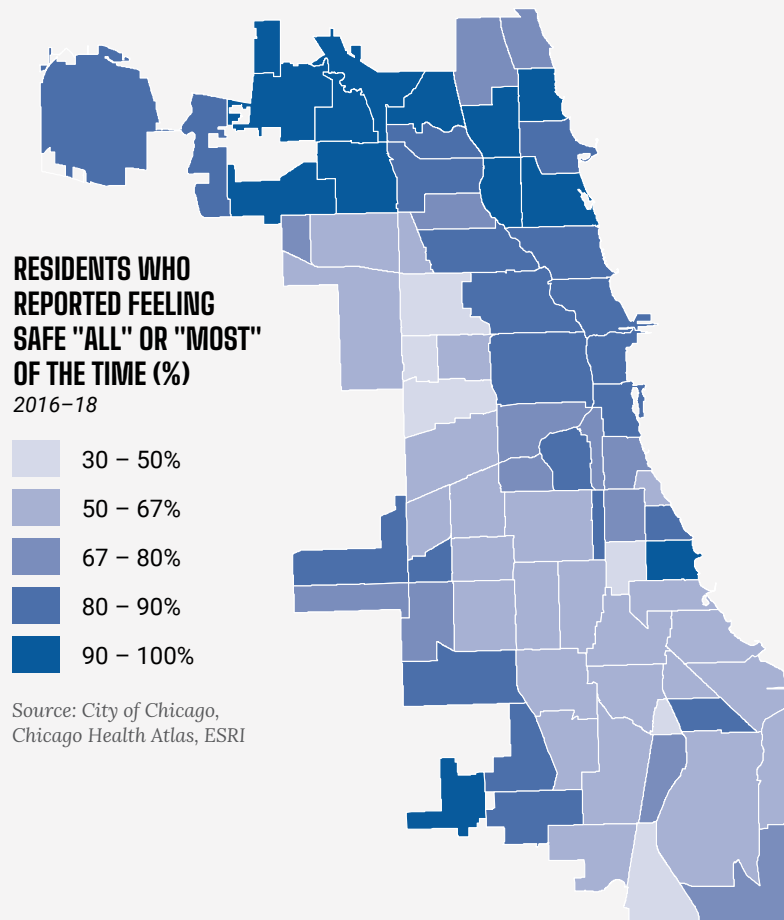
To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 4.1** Reduce instances of violence in communities most impacted by violence and the criminal-legal system.
- 4.2** Reduce harmful contact between community and police and increase police accountability.
- 4.3** Support coordination and deployment of rapid, community-based responses to outbreaks of violence.
- 4.4** Support and educate community members on how to address incidences of trauma.
- 4.5** Expand and sustain programs for people previously incarcerated or harmed in other ways by the criminal-legal system.
- 4.6** Reduce incidences of and support the stability, healing and thriving of survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking through citywide trauma-informed response.



## SUPPORTING DATA

## Community rates of feeling safe "all" or "most" of the time



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

– *Katelyn Johnson* | BlackRoots Alliance, Executive Director

## GOAL 5

# Make infrastructure, physical spaces and services safe, beautiful and accessible to the aspirations and cultures of communities.

Improved health- and accessibility-focused design standards for public spaces, buildings, services and infrastructure will make Chicago’s cityscape more supportive for all people’s health and wellbeing. This is especially needed for the estimated 11% of Chicagoans and 35% of Chicago older persons who have a disability, people experiencing homelessness and people with medical conditions for which amenities can be designed to support. Making the cityscape responsive to people’s health and accessibility needs supports the wellbeing and safety of all Chicagoans and visitors to the city.

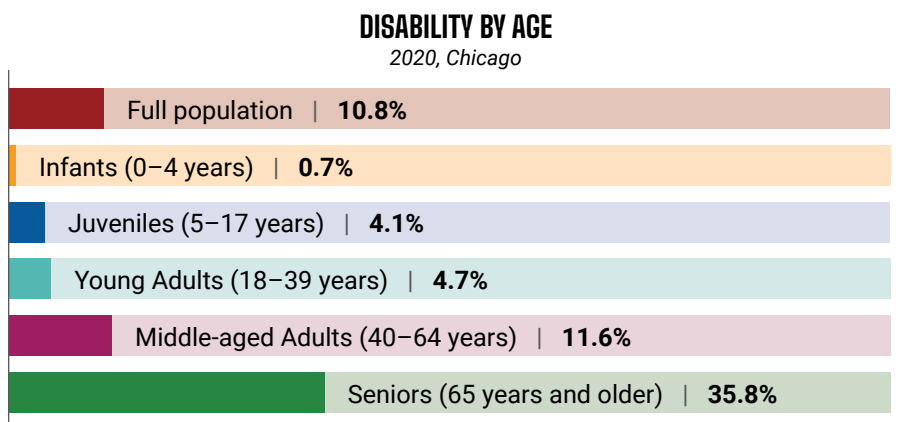
### OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 5.1** Enhance accessibility, safety and quality of public spaces.
- 5.2** Provide and facilitate the ownership and activation of vacant lots and buildings by block residents and local businesses.
- 5.3** Develop infrastructure and amenities that support everyone, especially people with health and mobility challenges.
- 5.4** Make physical activity opportunities accessible, easy and equitable.

### SUPPORTING DATA

Approximately 11% of Chicagoans identify as a person with a disability or as disabled.



Source: Chicago Health Atlas, American Community Survey

To see the policy ideas developed by the **Public Health & Safety** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)







■ ★ WE WILL CHICAGO

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Creating access and connections through  
safe and reliable physical infrastructure  
and transportation networks

# TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



**Chicago's transportation and infrastructure systems support the mobility of people, goods, services and information throughout the city and beyond.**

The systems include extensive passenger rail and bus routes, streets and alleys, highways, airports, industrial rail lines, waterways, bike lanes, sidewalks, trails, power grids, communications networks and other public and private assets.

Considered one of the most well-connected cities in the country and a global transportation hub, Chicago still has multiple gaps in services and infrastructure resources that impact the people who live and work here. Gaps include public transit services, neighborhood walkability, protected bike lanes, broadband access and negative impacts associated with infrastructure construction and operation.

The Transportation & Infrastructure pillar's goals are focused on maintaining Chicago's existing systems while enhancing their access and benefits to all city residents and workers.



*“ Public transportation spots are not always accessible to people with wheelchairs. Ideally, it would be great if all "L" Train stops, Metra and Amtrak were wheelchair accessible. ”*

*— Michelle | West Loop*



## KEY TERMS

### Complete Streets

The approach to planning, designing, building, operating and maintaining streets that enables safe, easy access for all people who need to use them, including pedestrians, people using mobility devices, transit riders, bicyclists and motorists of all ages and abilities.

### Shared Mobility

Transportation services and resources that are shared among users, either together or one after another, such as bike and scooter sharing, carsharing, carpooling and vanpooling.

### Universal Accessibility

Universal accessibility means that everyone – in all stages of life, regardless of any disability – can access transportation options that will get them anywhere they need to go.

### Public Transit

A form of transportation provided by local agencies that enable people to travel together along designated routes that are managed on a schedule, where a fee is charged for each trip. Transit agencies in Chicago include the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra and Pace.

*Most maps within the plan incorporate data collected at one of several defined subgeographies, including official Chicago Community Area boundaries and census tracts/block groups used by the U.S. Census and the American Community Survey. Some data sources are only available at the Community Area level, while others are available at more detailed subgeographies. These subgeographies span areas that are non-residential, including parks, bodies of water, industrial areas, and O'Hare Airport. In these instances, the data presented is intended to reflect average conditions of the residents, employees, etc. who are located nearby.*

## GOAL 1

# Ensure the city's transportation networks and infrastructure systems are safe, equitable and accessible for all.

While many aspects of existing networks and the built infrastructure sustain the lives of Chicagoans, not all residents experience the same level of access or connectivity. Ongoing efforts to expand and modernize Chicago's public transit, transportation and infrastructure networks should prioritize geographies and users that have been marginalized. Far South and West Side neighborhoods experience more limited commuter rail service and predominantly Black and Latino households lack access to broadband internet. According to a Metropolitan Planning Council report, nearly every person in the Chicago region, or someone they care for, will face a disability that impacts their mobility at some point in their life. Age, illness, injury, pregnancy and genetics can all affect mobility. Chicago's infrastructure system must be designed to meet the needs of all residents, no matter their age or ability.

## OBJECTIVES

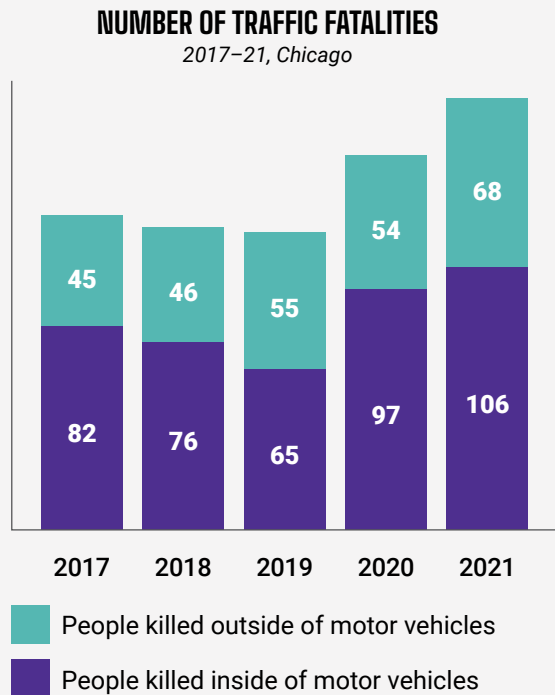
*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 1.1** Ensure transportation and infrastructure systems are equitably distributed, accessible and affordable.
- 1.2** Prioritize infrastructure that reinforces safe movement for all users, regardless of mode, age, ability or income.
- 1.3** Design and maintain infrastructure that enhances quality of life and pride of place.
- 1.4** Ensure transportation systems support Chicago's world class airports.
- 1.5** Ensure access to high-quality broadband internet across the city.



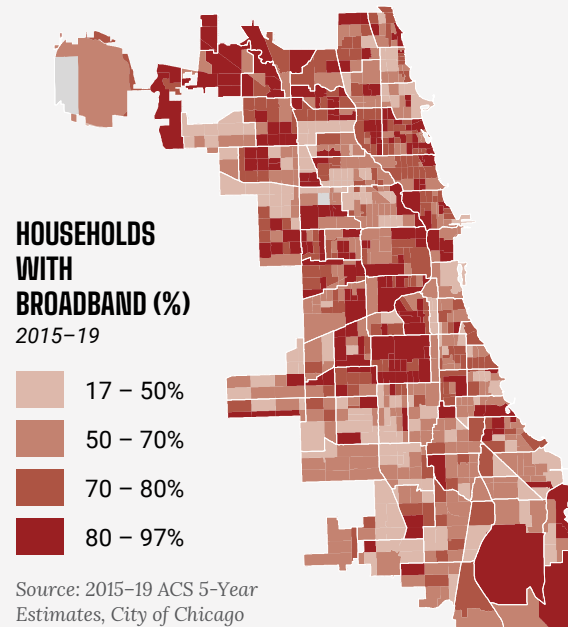
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**The majority of Chicago traffic crash deaths involve vehicle occupants or drivers.**



Source: City of Chicago Department of Transportation, May 2022

**Less than 70% of South and West Side households have broadband internet.**



“ I frequently ride my bike to a part-time job on the far West Side. As I trend south and west, the ride gets rougher and more hostile. There is noticeably less infrastructure for those outside of cars, and the car infrastructure is in notably worse shape. ”

– Joshua Woods | Connetics Transportation Group, Planner I



## GOAL 2

# Create transportation networks that support greater connectivity by active and sustainable options such as walking, public transit, biking and other methods that do not require car ownership.

While investments continue to be made in the City’s transit system and bike network, most Chicago commuters drive to work, according to U.S. Census data. Prioritizing programs to expand other transportation options, improve street safety and reduce the need to travel by car may result in reduced congestion, decreased pollution, cheaper transportation costs, time savings for commuters and more healthy and sustainable lifestyles for the entire region.

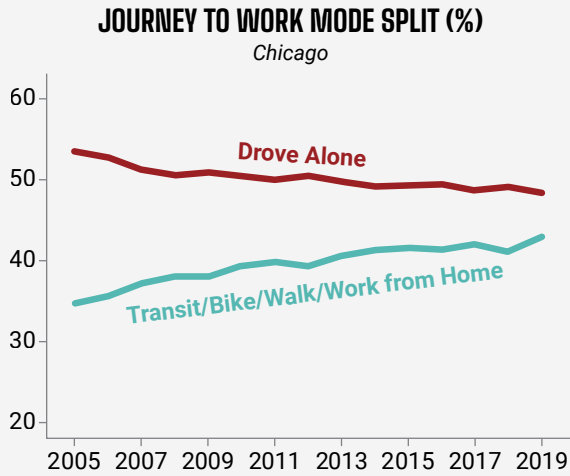
## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

- 2.1** Prioritize expanding public transit options in communities with the greatest mobility needs.
- 2.2** Prioritize public transit options that create connectivity across neighborhoods outside of the downtown.
- 2.3** Integrate and seamlessly connect active and sustainable transportation options such as walking, transit, biking and riding scooters.
- 2.4** Prioritize infrastructure that is aesthetically pleasing and inviting, designing and building spaces that are calm, protected and safe for people walking, using transit, biking and making connections between modes.
- 2.5** Prioritize investments in infrastructure and transit that facilitate walking, transit and biking.

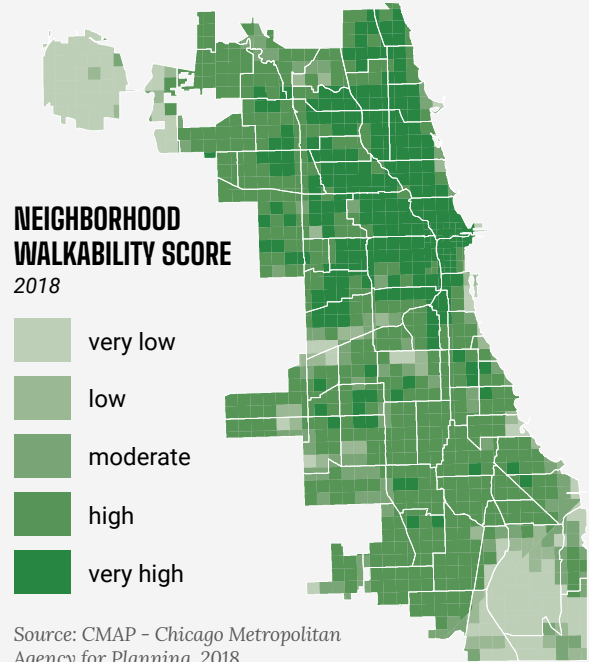
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**More Chicagoans are choosing alternative transportation modes for their commutes.**

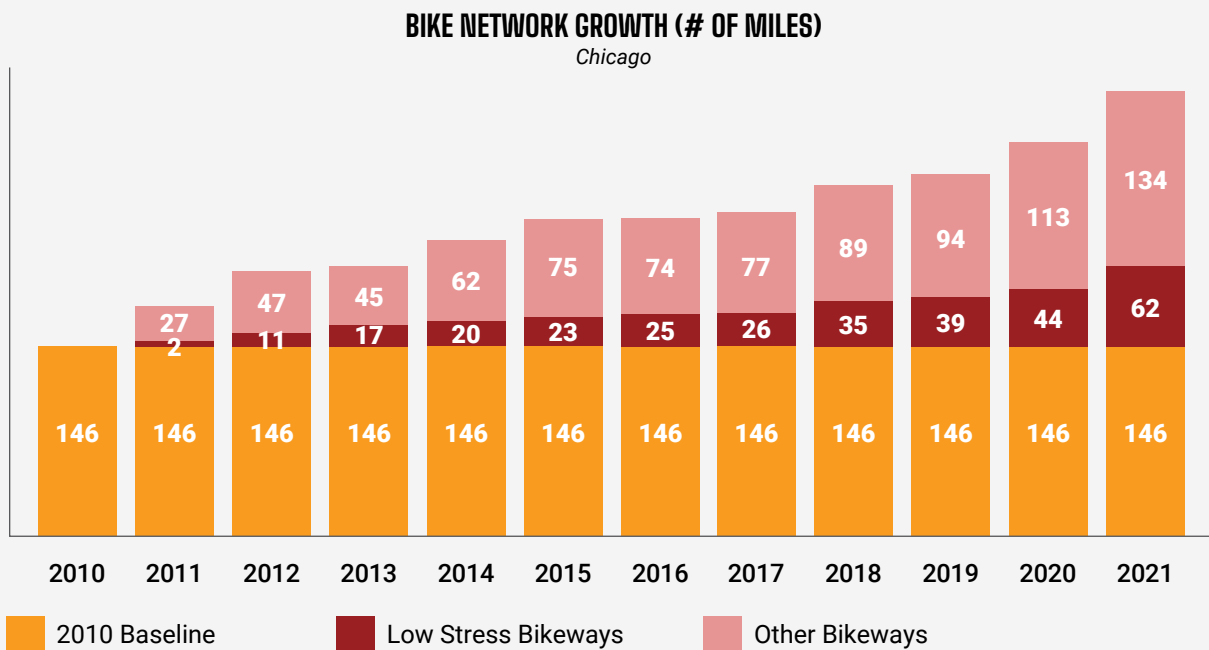


Source: ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables, 2019

**Chicago's most walkable neighborhoods are on the North Side.**



**Chicago's bicycle infrastructure continues to expand.**



Source: Chicago Department of Transportation

## GOAL 3

# Balance the economic benefits of moving goods with negative impacts on communities, eliminating, then equitably distributing burdens.

Chicago's evolution as a global transportation hub is a strong contributor to the region's economy. However, this status comes with consequences to some residential neighborhoods that are disproportionately exposed to excessive air pollution and industrial traffic. Land use and investment patterns have resulted in environmental burdens on the South, Southwest and Far South sides.

## OBJECTIVES

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

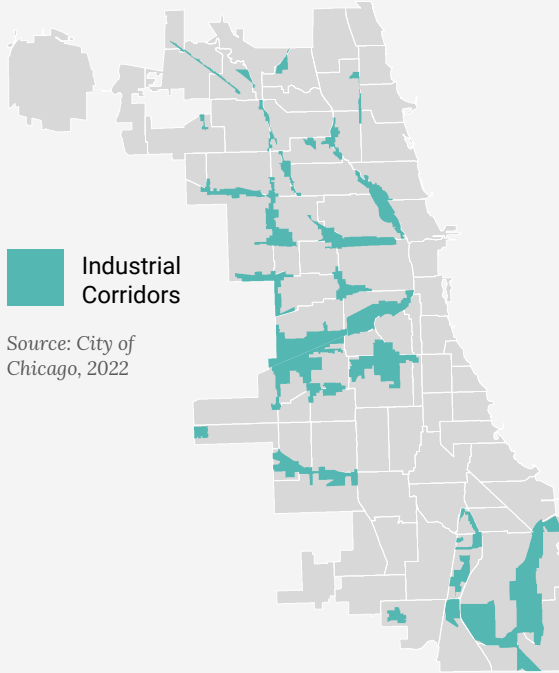
- 3.1** Make freight corridors safe for all, prioritizing the safety of people walking, using transit and biking.
- 3.2** Mitigate the health, safety and environmental burdens caused by trains, trucks and delivery vehicles.
- 3.3** Reduce the disproportionate burdens on communities adjacent to industrial corridors, intermodal facilities and airports.
- 3.4** Ensure freight-related projects are compatible with local community plans.
- 3.5** Maintain the City's role as a global intermodal hub with strategic and innovative transportation and infrastructure investments.



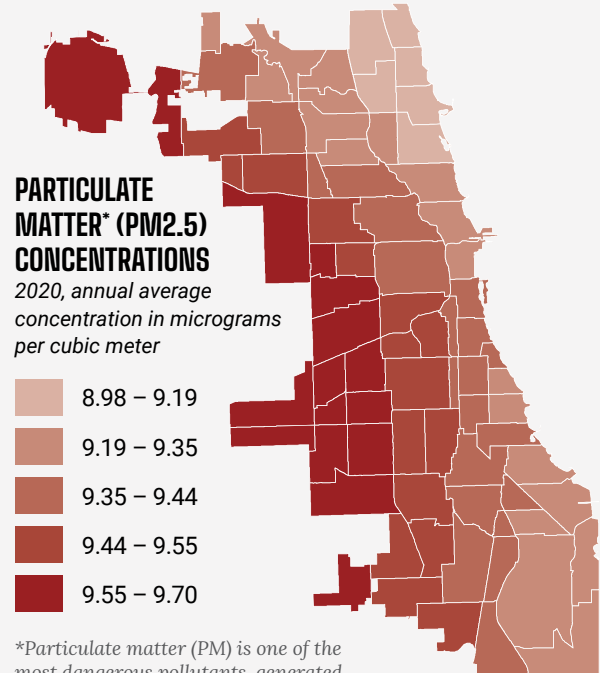


**SUPPORTING DATA**

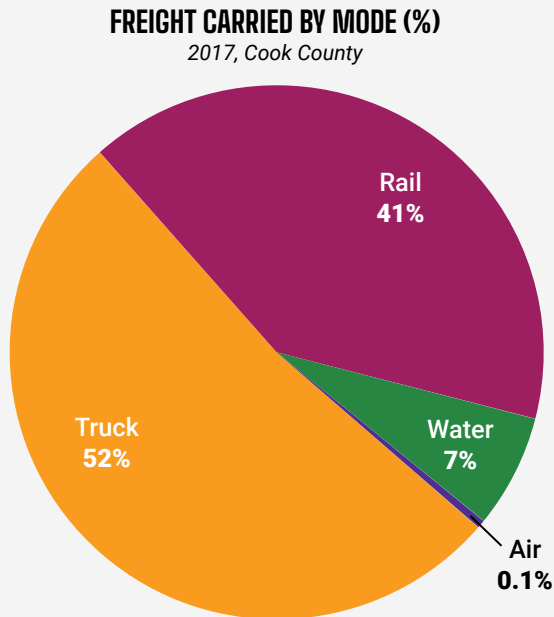
**Chicago's 26 industrial corridors are primarily located along waterways, highways and rail lines.**



**Areas located near highways and industrial facilities experience higher levels of air pollution.**



**Trucks carry more than half of all freight in Cook County.**



Source: Master Plan for Illinois International Port District (IIPD)

“ Freight activity is a vital economic driver for communities. It is not something that people want to remove. But you want to be smart about the way it interacts in neighborhoods and on those corridors where you have heavy bike traffic and transit. ”

– Dr. Billy Bachman | Urban Design 4 Health, Senior Analyst & Marketing Strategist

## GOAL 4

# Prioritize investments in communities that have been negatively impacted in past transportation and infrastructure decision-making.

The construction of many interstate highways, institutions and large facilities in Chicago were often completed where socioeconomic factors provided the fewest barriers to their development. Today, their presence can present more burdens than benefits for nearby residents due to pollution, gentrification, displacement and other negative impacts.

### OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, We Will...

- 4.1** Reconnect communities that have been divided by transportation infrastructure.
- 4.2** Support neighborhood and network-scale transportation and infrastructure projects advocated by local communities.

- 4.3** Establish use of equity-related metrics in project development and evaluation processes for transportation and infrastructure projects.

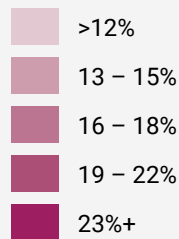
chicago.com



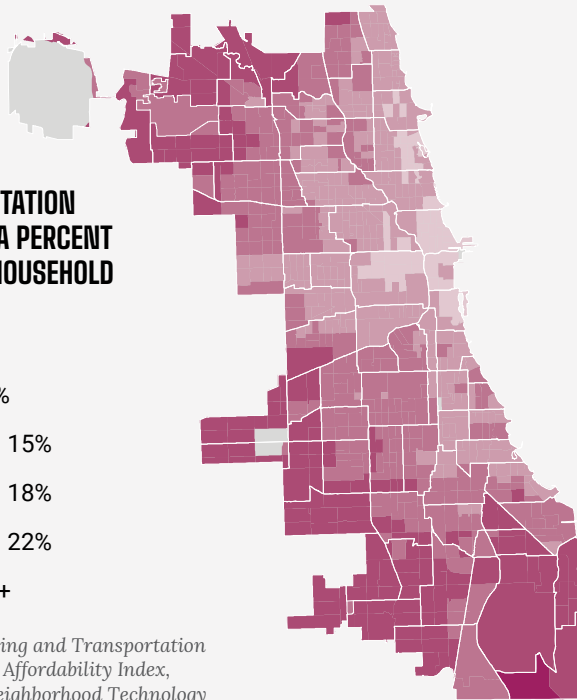
**SUPPORTING DATA**

**Households located near the city's borders generally experience higher transportation costs.**

**TRANSPORTATION COSTS AS A PERCENT OF TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME**  
2015-17



Source: Housing and Transportation Index (H+T®) Affordability Index, Center for Neighborhood Technology



Areas most impacted by roadway infrastructure, particularly on the South Side, tend to experience

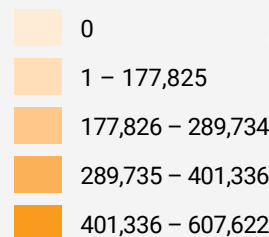
**HIGHER TRANSPORTATION COSTS** and **HIGHER TRAVEL TIMES TO JOBS BY TRANSIT.**

**Entry-level jobs with the shortest commutes are primarily located downtown and in adjacent community areas.**

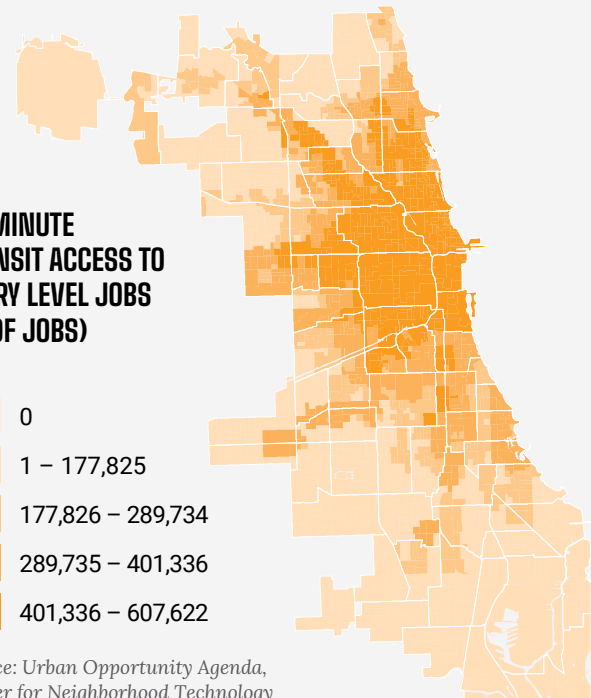
“ Early in this process we spoke a lot about how infrastructure has divided our communities, and our policies should focus on reconnecting communities. ”

— Ben Cosgrove | Englewood STEM High School, Biology and Chemistry Teacher

**30 MINUTE TRANSIT ACCESS TO ENTRY LEVEL JOBS (# OF JOBS)**  
2019



Source: Urban Opportunity Agenda, Center for Neighborhood Technology





**FOOD ACCESS & YOUTH CORPS PROGRAMMING**

**GOAL 5**

**Leverage resources for transportation and infrastructure projects that promote environmental sustainability and resilience.**

Strategic public investments that enhance clean transportation options – such as bicycling and electric vehicles – and manage the impact of climate change – such as stormwater landscapes – will help make Chicago more sustainable for all.

**OBJECTIVES**

*To achieve this goal, We Will...*

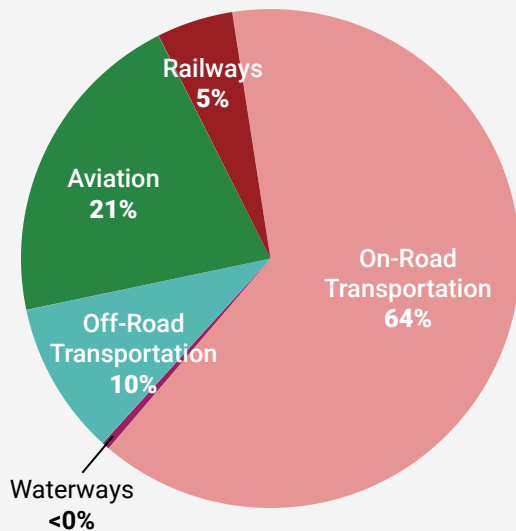
- 5.1** Reduce pollutants generated by transportation-related sources to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality.
- 5.2** Expand the use and availability of transportation and infrastructure funding sources for all neighborhoods to increase climate-smart investments and overall community resiliency.
- 5.3** Invest in transportation and infrastructure projects that support resilience and protect water and other natural resources.
- 5.4** Leverage transportation and infrastructure assets to manage the environmental impacts of flooding and stormwater runoff.
- 5.5** Require the use of sustainable design guidelines and the use of renewable and sustainable materials in transportation and infrastructure projects.

**SUPPORTING DATA**

The majority of transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions comes from vehicles.

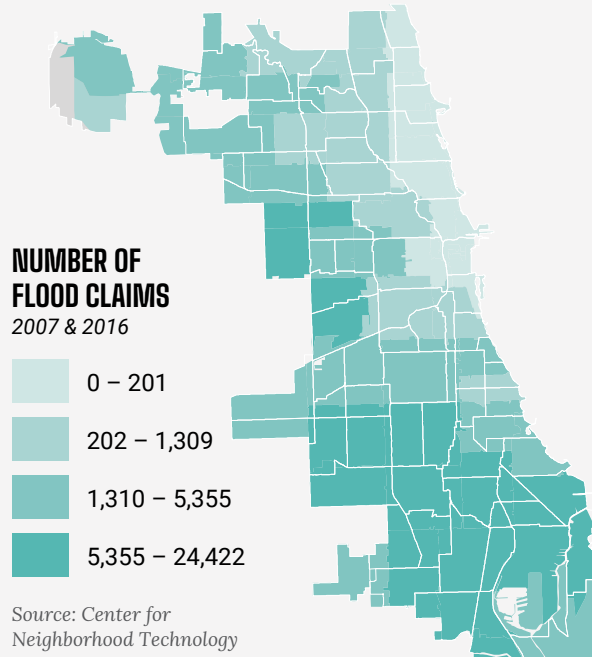
**TRANSPORTATION-GENERATED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BY SOURCE**

2017, Chicago



Source: City of Chicago Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report

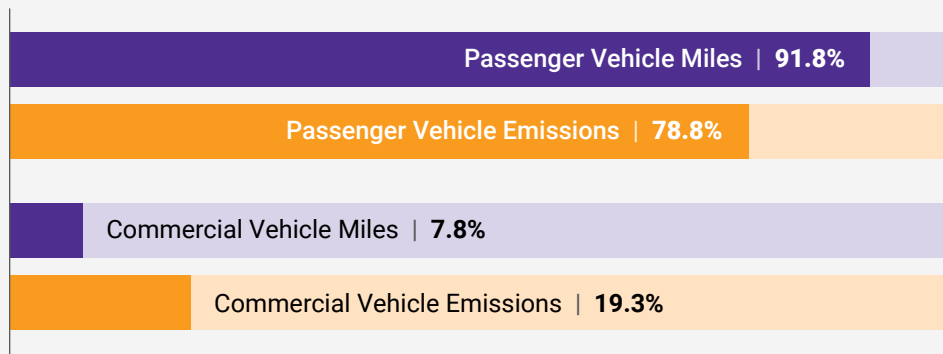
87% of flood claims were paid on the South and West sides.



Passenger vehicles and gas-fueled commercial vehicles represent substantial opportunities to decrease harmful emissions.

**VEHICLES MILES AND EMISSIONS FOR PASSENGER AND COMMERCIAL VEHICLES (% OF TOTAL)**

2020, Chicago



Vehicle miles represents the total amount of miles driven by all vehicles for a specific time period, typically per year. For this table the amount of travel is broken down by vehicle type (passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles). Vehicle emissions are greenhouse gas emissions generated by vehicles from burning fossil fuel for cars, trucks, ships, trains, and planes.

Source: Regional Air Quality Conformity Analysis, Spring 2020, CMAP

# Hybrid Bus

“ Ensure folks who are offering the plan are held accountable to what is in the plan. Create trust by showing folks that their engagement as a community is being honored both in listening and in following through. ”

— *LaTanya Lane* | Volunteer



To see the policy ideas developed by the **Transportation & Infrastructure** pillar team, visit [wewillchicago.com](http://wewillchicago.com)



# BRINGING THE PLAN TO LIFE



During the three-year process to create *We Will Chicago*, the City and sister agencies have already made great strides to realize the *We Will Chicago* vision and challenge the racial and social inequities discussed throughout this plan.

**The City is advancing many of the plan's objectives every day through existing departmental strategic plans and initiatives together with sister agencies and cross-sector partners. Below is a list of highlighted accomplishments over the last three years across every pillar of the plan.**

**View the "We Will in Action" Supplemental Document for an in-depth list of aligned accomplishments.**

## Art & Culture

Saw a transformational influx of resources to support the creative economy, including more than \$12 million committed for public art in all INVEST South/West neighborhoods, \$3.5 million for public art projects at O'Hare International Airport and an increase from \$2.7 million to \$12.7 million in cultural grants for the arts sector.

In response to the pandemic, created the Performance Venue Relief Fund to provide grants of at least \$10,000 to performing arts venues, resulting in 120 grant recipients, and the Chicago Creative Worker Assistance

Program, to provide \$2,000-\$5,000 in relief funds to 677 individuals.

## Civic & Community Engagement

Created the first-ever Mayor's Youth Commission to bring youth voice and leadership to the Lightfoot administration's policies and initiatives.

Appointed the City's first Chief Equity Officer and codified the Office of Equity and Racial Justice in City law, requiring all City departments to create and maintain racial equity action plans and publicly report progress on the plans.

## Economic Development

Launched ChiBizStrong, a plan to deliver the financial relief and regulatory reform needed for Chicago's small businesses to recover from COVID-19. The City slashed bureaucratic red tape by expediting signage and health inspections for businesses and restaurants and distributed over \$100 million in pandemic relief through ChiBizStrong and other programs.

Launched the Chicago Resilient Communities Pilot, one of the largest monthly cash assistance programs in the nation, supporting 5,000 low-income households with \$500 a month for 12 months to provide greater financial stability and support an equitable economic recovery.

## Housing & Neighborhoods

Announced the largest investment in affordable housing in Chicago's history, with 24 new developments set to preserve or create 2,400 rental units across the city and mobilize more than \$1 billion in affordable development.

Marked three years of Mayor Lightfoot's INVEST South/West initiative with more than \$2.2 billion in public and private investment commitments within 10 South and West Side community areas.

Passed the Connected Communities Ordinance, which updated the City's zoning code to advance equitable transit-oriented development. The ordinance will facilitate more investment near transit while preventing displacement on the South and West sides, promote affordable housing in transit-rich communities on the North and Northwest sides and make sidewalks and streets safer everywhere.

## Environment, Climate & Energy

Trained and worked with community ambassadors – alongside the Chicago Park District, the Chicago Department of Transportation and the Department of Streets and Sanitation – to plant 18,000 new trees as part of Our Roots Chicago, the City's strategy to plant 75,000 trees over the next five years.

## Lifelong Learning

Expanded Sunday Chicago Public Library hours, eliminated library late fines and cancelled outstanding patron debt.

Created Chicago Connected, a \$50 million public-private partnership aimed at eliminating the digital divide for CPS students and their families by providing no-cost high-speed internet service to more than 100,000 CPS students and their families, plus free digital learning tools.

## Public Health & Safety

Invested \$56 million to establish a citywide COVID Contact

Tracing Corps, resulting in grants to 31 CBOs in Chicago's hardest-hit communities to hire 450 contact tracers and 31 supervisors.

Increased funding by 1,400% for community approaches to violence reduction by investing nearly \$25 million in 2020 and 2021 to build out the City's street outreach and victim services provider network. The services support and intervene with individuals at highest risk of violence while providing trauma-informed services to victims of violence and their families.

Mayor Lightfoot and CDPH opened a mass vaccination site at United Center, set up community clinics at City Colleges, hosted pop-up events and launched an at-home vaccination program, administering nearly 500,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses. CCC and CDPH also offered a free Vaccine Ambassador course in English and Spanish at Malcolm X College.

Expanded the Trauma-Informed Centers of Care network to fund no barrier mental health services in all 77 Chicago neighborhoods. CDPH's mental health services were on track to serve 60,000 Chicago residents.

## Transportation & Infrastructure

After nearly five decades of promises, saw the Red Line Extension (RLE) receive key funding and City Council approval to become a reality. The project will bring an investment of \$3.6 billion and thousands of construction jobs. Additionally, 25,000 jobs will become accessible within a 45-minute commute from the RLE Project Area.

Continued to expand and improve Chicago's bikeway network, adding nearly 40 miles in 2022 and surpassing 100 miles added since Mayor Lightfoot took office. Chicago has averaged about 40 miles of new bikeway investments per year, compared to an average of 23 miles prior to 2020. In 2022, CDOT began a new program to upgrade all existing plastic-protected lanes to concrete curbs to provide increased safety for all road users.



# OTHER CITY INITIATIVES

As We Will Chicago advances from pre-planning into implementation in 2023 and beyond, multiple City agencies are already administering new programs and resources that share the plan's goals for citywide equity and resilience.

## ***Programs include:***

### **Blueprint for Fair Housing**

Issued in spring 2021, the City's fair housing blueprint includes eight goals and associated strategies to reduce housing segregation, access disparities and inequitable investment patterns that have made Chicago the fifth-most racially and economically segregated metropolitan area in the country.

### **Chicago Business Centers and Neighborhood Business Development Centers**

The Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection programs provide licensing and development-oriented assistance to small businesses through eight regional business hubs and through non-profit business service organizations with special focus on entrepreneurs in historically underserved areas.

### **Chicago Recovery Plan**

The Chicago Recovery Plan was created in 2021 to guide an equitable and sustainable allocation of \$1.2 billion in federal funding for COVID-19-related recovery efforts. The plan focuses on communities hit hardest by the pandemic by supporting projects that improve residents' health, wellbeing, quality of life and related amenities.

### **Chicago Monuments Project**

The Chicago Monuments Project and 2022 report grapple with the often unacknowledged—or forgotten—history associated with the City's various municipal art collections and provide a vehicle to address the truths of Chicago's racial history, confront the ways in which that history has and has not been memorialized, and develop a framework for marking public space that elevates new ways to memorialize Chicago's history more equitably and accurately. It is a collaboration

between the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, Chicago Public Schools, and the Chicago Park District.

### **Climate Action Plan**

Chicago's 2022 Climate Action Plan (CAP) sets a course to reduce the city's carbon emissions 62% by 2040. Anchored in values of economic inclusion and savings, pollution burden reduction and equitable access to critical infrastructure and community health and resilience, the 2022 CAP prioritizes delivering meaningful community benefits and system improvements as the City continues to lead on climate.

### **Community Safety Coordination Center**

The community safety initiative addresses the root causes of violence and applies lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to coordinate a data-informed, evidence-based and community-driven response to gun violence.

### **Community Wealth-Building**

Led by Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice, the wealth-building initiative and its advisory council support models of local, democratic and shared ownership of community assets such as worker cooperatives, community land trusts and more.

### **Equitable Transit-Oriented Development (ETOD)**

City policies have encouraged dense, pedestrian-friendly development near transit since 2013. In 2021, Plan Commission adopted Chicago's first-ever equitable TOD plan to ensure all residents in Chicago are able to live in walkable, vibrant communities connected to transit.

## Every Child Ready Chicago

A public-private partnership led by the Mayor's Office in partnership with Start Early, the Every Child program provides resources to ensure children entering kindergarten are ready to succeed in school and life.

## Family Connects Chicago

Family Connects provides in-home nursing services, guidance and resources to families with newborns.

## Food Equity Council

Formally established in February 2022, the Food Equity Council is a multiyear effort to transform our food system into one that is more just and equitable. This private-public partnership is collaborating to address immediate needs as well as getting to the root causes of food inequity.

## The Framework for Mental Health Equity

As an action plan for mental health equity, the framework consists of an integrated network of service providers that ensure all residents have convenient and timely access to the mental health services.

## Gender-Based Violence and Human Trafficking Strategic Plan

Released in 2021, the plan addresses gender-based violence and human trafficking by acknowledging the intersection of racism and gender inequities while implementing trauma-informed strategies that create a safer, more equitable and inclusive Chicago.

## Healthy Chicago 2025

Chicago's five-year community health improvement plan that focuses on racial and health equity to meet our goal of reducing the Black-white life expectancy gap. Launched in 2020, Healthy Chicago reflects the work of community members and organizations to assess the current status of our communities and organizations and develop approaches to strengthen neighborhood vitality and system coordination.

## INVEST South/West

INVEST South/West is a multi-departmental community revitalization initiative launched in 2019 that is strategically reversing decades of disinvestment in 12 commercial corridors on the South and West sides. The initiative has already aligned more than \$2 billion in public and private investments that are bringing vitality, jobs and economic opportunity to the targeted areas.

## Let's Go. Chicago Roadmap

The Chicago Public Schools and City Colleges initiative is designed to improve student outcomes involving college readiness, enrollment, persistence, degree attainment, and employment.

## My CHI. My Future.

The youth development initiative aims to connect every young Chicagoan to an out-of-school program affiliated with more than 220 organizations, sister agencies and departments citywide.

## Our Roots Chicago

Part of the Climate Action Plan, Our Roots Chicago aims to equitably expand the city's tree canopy with 75,000 new trees in 2022.

## Strategic Plan for Transportation

The Chicago Department of Transportation's 2021 strategic plan was the country's first to address the previous year's health, economic and racial justice crises by partnering with community and civic groups to ensure its goals, strategies and benchmarks reflect the lived experience of Chicagoans and long-standing equity issues in transportation.

## Year of Healing

The Mayor's Office of Equity and Racial Justice initiative aims to build racial healing and transformation through three core goals in 2022: reflecting on our past, reclaiming our present, and reimagining our future.

# PLANS, PURPOSES AND PLAN COMMISSION



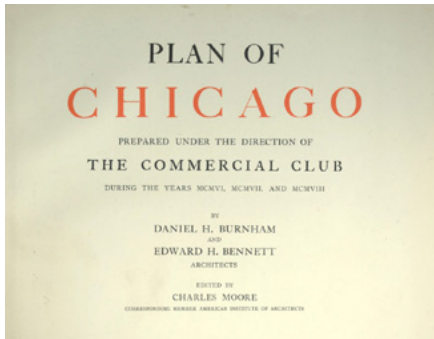
**Chicago's history has been shaped by multiple private- and public-sector plans, policies and regulations that impact people who live and work here. While many plans have focused on specific community areas, like Englewood, or citywide assets, like the Chicago River, few have endeavored to address the entire city in a single document like We Will Chicago.**

Plans for Chicago typically identify goals and objectives and include strategies on how to achieve them. Of the hundreds of plans that have been created by neighborhood groups, business associations, civic organizations and City departments, the plans that were formally adopted by the Chicago Plan Commission attained unique status as documents intended to guide government decision-making. However, Chicago City Council approval is generally required for the legislation, budgeting and individual project approvals needed for a plan's implementation.

To build on past planning efforts in Chicago, at the start of We Will Chicago, the City collected, reviewed and summarized 336 citywide and neighborhood plans from between 1970 and 2020. This inventory includes plans created by local government departments and agencies, educational institutions and civic and community organizations with varying levels of stakeholder engagement. To shape the implementation of We Will Chicago and future local planning processes, this inventory is now a publicly available resource at [WeWillChicago.com](http://WeWillChicago.com).

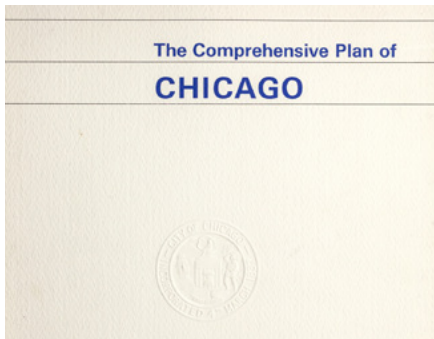
***Overviews of select City plans and their purposes are on the following pages.***

## Citywide Plans



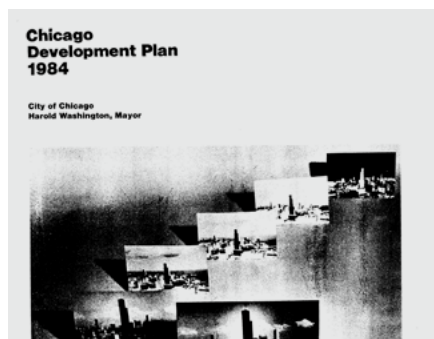
### Plan of Chicago

Completed in 1909 by the Commercial Club of Chicago under the guidance of architects Daniel Burnham and Edward Bennett, the Plan of Chicago established a vision for the City’s growth that was so ambitious, the Chicago Plan Commission was created to help oversee its implementation. The plan’s highly stylized renderings helped Chicagoans envision and support the development of key infrastructure projects that continue to define major features of the city’s physical environment. Chicago’s publicly accessible lakefront, Union Station, Wacker Drive, Ogden Avenue, Northerly Island and Navy Pier are among the plan’s legacy projects. The three-year planning process considered social aspects of the city’s growth but ultimately excluded them as formal goals.



### Comprehensive Plan of Chicago

Published in 1966 by the Department of Development and Planning, the Comprehensive Plan’s wide-ranging scope addressed numerous social, physical, environmental, residential and economic issues. Its multi-phase objectives included new parks, roadways, industrial facilities, commercial centers and related quality-of-life enhancements for various planning districts throughout the city. While there is no known record of its adoption by Plan Commission, the plan contributed to the reuse of underutilized downtown rail yards for projects like Illinois Center and Dearborn Park, and it shepherded the bond-funded construction of modern fire and police buildings, health clinics, libraries and other public facilities throughout Chicago.



### Chicago Works Together: 1984 Development Plan

Published a year after Harold Washington was elected mayor, Chicago Works Together utilized input from community-based organizations, labor groups, businesses and other stakeholders to establish social and economic development goals that sought to balance downtown and neighborhood investment. Implementation was systemically impeded by City Council’s majority white aldermen—during an era known as “Council Wars”—and progress effectively ended with the mayor’s death in 1987. This plan was not officially adopted as a citywide plan by the Chicago Plan Commission.

## Community Plans



### Central Area Plan

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2003, the Central Area Plan was drafted by City departments and private consultants to coordinate downtown growth around three main themes: high-density mixed-use vitality, strengthened transportation connections and expanded public open spaces and waterfronts. Several projects were subsequently completed, including a West Loop transit hub and an expanded Riverwalk, while others are still contemplated. The plan helped guide a downtown renaissance that was partly fueled by the return of residents and corporate headquarters from the suburbs, a trend shared with many U.S. cities.



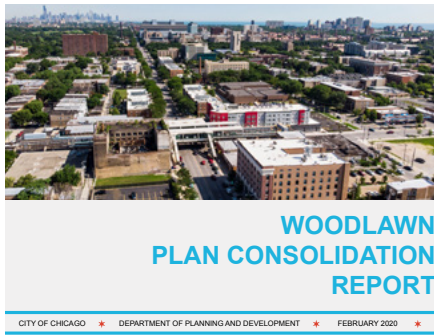
### Green Healthy Neighborhoods

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2014, Green Healthy Neighborhoods was created by the Department of Planning and Development, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and community partners to maximize the use of vacant land and other neighborhood resources within Chicago's Englewood, West Englewood, Washington Park and Woodlawn communities, as well as parts of the New City, Fuller Park and Greater Grand Crossing communities. The plan helped launch programs that provide for the sale of vacant City lots to nearby property owners and, the development of an urban district while positioning the Englewood elevated rail line for a recent \$35 million federal grant request.



### North Branch Framework

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2017, the North Branch Framework is a land use plan created by City departments and private consultants for 760 acres within the North Branch Industrial Corridor. The framework's three main goals aimed to maintain the corridor as an economic engine and job center, provide better access for all transportation modes and enhance the area's unique natural and built environment. The plan also led to the allocation of more than \$1 billion in future property tax revenues for new public infrastructure that will, in part, support the development of Lincoln Yards.



## Woodlawn Consolidation Report

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2020, the Woodlawn Consolidation Report was compiled by the Departments of Housing and Planning and Development to address community concerns about the potential impacts of the Obama Presidential Center on existing residents and businesses, especially in terms of affordability and gentrification. The report includes portions of nine existing neighborhood plans that were already created by community stakeholders but never formally adopted by Plan Commission.

## Cultural Plans



## Chicago Cultural Plan 2012

Launched in 2012 by the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, the goal of the plan was to create a blueprint for Chicago to elevate its profile as a global capital for creativity, innovation and excellence in the arts. Rooted in the practice of community engagement established during the 1986 cultural planning process, citywide conversations engaged more than 4,700 residents and resulted in 10 priorities and over 200 proposed initiatives. Concurrently, Chicago Public Schools' produced its first-ever Arts Education Plan.

## Open Space and Sustainability Plans



## Chicago Nature and Wildlife Plan

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2006, the Chicago Nature and Wildlife Plan was created by the Department of Planning and Development and community partners to establish a framework for protecting and expanding the city's ecosystems for the benefit of wildlife and people. The plan indexed more than 4,800 acres of local ecosystems and potential restoration sites and identified key land acquisitions like the 20-acres of unplatted cemetery land now the West Ridge Nature Preserve and the eagle habitat owned by Mittal Steel.



## CHICAGO RIVER DESIGN GUIDELINES

### Chicago River Design Guidelines

Adopted by Plan Commission in 2019, the latest version of the Chicago River Design Guidelines was created by the Department of Planning and Development to establish construction guidelines for projects that reflect the river's evolving role as a quality-of-life amenity for adjacent neighborhoods. Previous development plans for the river corridor were adopted in 1999 and 2005, with each iteration focused on environmental health, public access and economic vitality.



### CitySpace Plan

Adopted by City Council in 1998, CitySpace identified comprehensive strategies for creating and preserving open space in Chicago. The planning process began in 1993 and involved the City of Chicago, Chicago Park District, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Chicago Public Schools and community partners. The plan examined the history of open space in Chicago, deficiencies in the City's inventory, and established goals for creating new open spaces that more equitably distributed funding and improvements based on community area deficiencies and needs. Implementation resulted in the creation of over 800 acres of new open space.



# COLLABORATORS



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American Indian Center

Austin Coming Together

Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance

Chicago City Council

The Chicago Community Trust

Chicago Department of Public Health

Chicago Department of Transportation

Chicago Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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Department of Family and Support Services

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MacArthur Foundation

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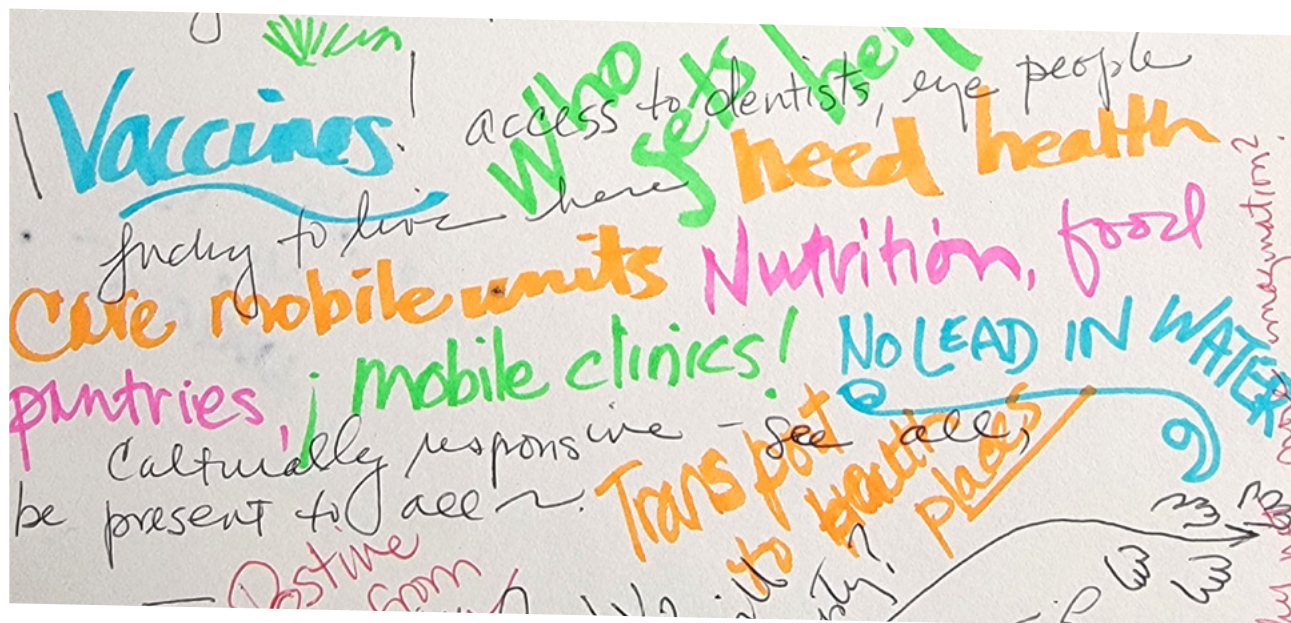
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AND DEVELOPMENT (UNTIL DEC. 2020)

Gabriela Jirasek | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
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Courtney Kashima | MUSE COMMUNITY + DESIGN

Skyler Larrimore | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE

Fran Lefor Rood | SB FRIEDMAN

Colleen Mahoney | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH

Kate McMahon | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
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Jamie Osborne | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

Katanya Raby | CITY OF CHICAGO MAYOR'S OFFICE  
(UNTIL MAR. 2021)

Bradley Roback | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

Marisa Schulz | ALL TOGETHER

Joshua Son | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
AND DEVELOPMENT

Peter Strazzabosco | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Noah Szafraniec | CITY OF CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF  
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# Special Acknowledgements & Thanks

## Chicago American Indian Community Collaborative

Pamala Silas

Marne Smiley | FACILITATOR

Shelly J. Tucciarelli, Visionary Ventures NFP

Angela Walden, Ph.D.

## LAI Central Area Roundtable

Jon DeVries | LAI/LEF

Paul O'Connor | POCHICAGO CONSULTING

Les Pollock | LAI/CAMIROS

Richard Wilson | LAI PRESIDENT/AS+GG

## Community Partner Support

The Chicago Community Trust for providing financial support to twelve Community Partner organizations.

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## Photography

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Honey Pot Performance | WE WILL CHICAGO LEAD PUBLIC  
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## Meeting-in-a-Box Pilot Participants

Alliance of the Southeast**	Greater Chatham Initiative
Arquitectos, INC*	Harris Holdings
Blacks in Green	Illinois Environmental Council
Buena Park Neighbors	Institute for Justice Clinic on Entrepreneurship
Chicago Asian American Community Leaders**	Jefferson Park Forward
Chicago Cares	Metropolitan Planning Council
Chicago Faith Community Leaders**	National PanHellenic Council of Chicago*
Chicago Food Policy Action Council	North Branch Works
Chicago Gay Men's Chorus*	North River Commission*
Chicago United for Equity	Northwest Side Community Development Corporation
Disability Lead*	Plates on Purpose
En Las Tablas Performing Arts*	Rogers Park Business Alliance*
Enlace Chicago*	Streeterville Organization of Active Residents (SOAR)
Equiticity	Territory NFP*
Friends of the Chicago River	Visionary Ventures NFP

\* We Will Chicago Community Partners

\*\* A descriptive group name, not an organization



*"I Will"* is one of Chicago's earliest mottos—a saying born from the ashes of the Great Fire of 1871. The phrase reflected residents' determination to reinvent what the city could become as the 20th century approached.

We Will Chicago makes clear who will lead the city's 21st century revitalization.

***We Will. Together.***



**Learn more and stay involved:  
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