

## Joint Public Comment on the proposed resolution to adopt the We Will Chicago Draft Framework Plan

Chris White <chris@asechicago.org>

Wed 1/11/2023 8:19 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

Cc: Kam Buckner Press <PRESS@kamformayor.com>;Team@gogreenchicago.com  
<Team@gogreenchicago.com>;brandonjjohn@gmail.com  
<brandonjjohn@gmail.com>;info@sophiaforchicago.com  
<info@sophiaforchicago.com>;info@lightfootforchicago.com  
<info@lightfootforchicago.com>;electrodsawyer@gmail.com  
<electrodsawyer@gmail.com>;media@paulvallas2023.com  
<media@paulvallas2023.com>;paulgvallas@gmail.com  
<paulgvallas@gmail.com>;Mayor@electwilliewilson.com <Mayor@electwilliewilson.com>;Danielle  
Simpson <Danielle@gogreenchicago.com>;alexis@brandonforchicago.com  
<alexis@brandonforchicago.com>;zbrahmbhatt21@gmail.com  
<zbrahmbhatt21@gmail.com>;robertwprevidi@gmail.com <robertwprevidi@gmail.com>;Amalia  
NietoGomez <amalia@asechicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Dear Chicago Plan Commission

Please see below our joint public comment on the proposed resolution to adopt the We Will Chicago Draft Framework Plan that is on the January 19th 2023 agenda.

Please confirm receipt.

The signatories to the comment had previously submitted these comments to DPD, but they do not seem to have impacted the draft submitted to the Plan Commission for consideration.

We respectfully ask that the Plan Commission delay adoption until more of the 600+ policy ideas that community leaders took time to propose during the planning process can be integrated into the plan.

Chris White

Organizing Director

*Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE)*

**WE MOVED! NOTE NEW ADDRESS!**

**8944 S Commercial Ave Suite 1. Chicago, IL 60617**

773-221-8908 (Office) | (847) 868-3509 ( Work Cell)

[www.asechicago.org](http://www.asechicago.org)

[facebook.com/AllianceOfTheSoutheast](https://facebook.com/AllianceOfTheSoutheast) | [twitter.com/asechicago](https://twitter.com/asechicago)

# **Southeast & Beyond: We Will Our Residents' Plan For Southeast Chicago & The City**

## Summary Outline of Major Themes, Topics, & Desired Outcomes from Southeast We Will Meetings on the City Plan

[bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond](https://bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond)

For a few years ending in 2022, community leaders in Southeast Chicago leaders held community meetings around We Will Chicago, which was promised to be a participatory process to draft a new city plan.

Unfortunately, outside of some data and vague goals, most of the 600 policy recommendations ( [bit.ly/WeWilChicagoPolicyIdeas](https://bit.ly/WeWilChicagoPolicyIdeas) ) made by leaders from across the city were not included in the draft plan that was released in mid July 2022 ( <https://bit.ly/WeWillJulyDraft> ). In contrast, many pages of the City of Chicago 1966 Comprehensive Plan ( [bit.ly/1966ChiPlan](https://bit.ly/1966ChiPlan) ), have very specific recommendations that often name specific infrastructure and institutions that are to be built and often with specific funding sources named.

Therefore, a committee of the Southeast Chicago We Will Participants have put together this outline of key recommendations that our neighbors have made during this process.

This document is a good faith attempt to collect the strongest points of agreement that were articulated at the Southeast community meetings and to turn them into clear and actionable recommendations. Most if not all of the original raw notes from the community process can be seen here: [bit.ly/sewwcrawnotes](https://bit.ly/sewwcrawnotes)

We ask you to sign on to our respectful call for the City of Chicago to incorporate our recommendations into the next draft of the We Will Chicago Plan by the beginning of the formal public comment process this fall. And we ask the city to partner with us to make these recommendations and a new, more equitable Chicago a reality. To sign on as an individual and/or organization, please go to [bit.ly/seplansignon](https://bit.ly/seplansignon)

If a detail, point, or nuance that was included or left out prevents you from signing on, we still encourage you to contact Alliance of the Southeast ( [asechicago.org](https://asechicago.org) ) for support and technical assistance in making your own public comment.

### 1. Food Access

- a. We need to eliminate Food Deserts
  - i. Food deserts are identified in many ways.
  - ii. Lack of fresh fruit, vegetables and meat.

- iii. 500 people or 80% of people must live near a large grocery store to not be in a food desert.
  - iv. We must admit that race has been a factor in placement of grocery stores in the past.
- b. Communities are asking for:
- i. Stores that are two to three blocks walking distances from home.
  - ii. Stores that are owned by people that look like them and understand their food preferences.
  - iii. Choices of stores, fruit stands, meat markets, full service.
  - iv. Help with planting vegetable gardens, using the city owned vacant lots.
  - v. Mobile groceries such as food trucks and grocery delivery.
- c. The Health department should respond to community complaints of lack of food and how it impacts the health of their clients and make recommendations that stores are placed in food deserts.
- d. Residents have a role to play in supporting nearby stores.
- e. Supply chain design (exporting/importing, agribusiness) and issues have hurt our access to food in existing stores even though we are surrounded by fertile farmland.
- f. The problem of lack of food access is related to how TIF dollars and public subsidies have been managed.
- g. There needs to be a consequence for store chains that pull out of subsidized areas then want subsidies, zoning changes, etc. in wealthier and whiter areas. Investing in underserved areas must be a condition of benefits and accommodations in other areas.
- h. Produce, dairy, poultry, seafood and meats should be fresh, affordable, and meet or exceed all established health, sanitation, and food safety standards and requirements.
- i. There should be greater investment in community owned or controlled stores, vegetable gardens, and farmers markets that take Linc.

## 2. Community Decision Making, Zoning Amendments, Tax Increment Financing

- a. We need a real communication plan to keep more neighbors aware and engaged
- b. We need more engagement with officials and decision makers as well as more information about what resources are available.
- c. We need improved models of participatory decision making in which we know that what we say actually makes a difference in what happens. We want a real seat at the table where the real decisions are made

### 3. We need better decision making about (TIF) and Other Public Subsidies

- a. City needs to increase transparency and stop taking TIF funds without community notification and engagement . All proposed TIF Fund transfers and developments are subject to the review of the Local TIF & Zoning Board.
- b. TIF and Zoning decisions should all be made by impacted residents, not politicians, corporations and a select few. This recommendation aligns with the City's plans to increase place-based decision making.
- c. Every ward should have an elected Local TIF & Zoning board overseeing public subsidies and land use . The Local TIF Board will review Redevelopment Agreements, Community Benefits Agreements, Zoning Amendments.
- d. The Local TIF & Zoning Board will establish a Good Neighbor Policy and work with stakeholders on policy education and compliance.
- e. Local TIF & Zoning Boards will have policies and procedures that protect the public from conflicts of interest. Board members will be required to recuse themselves from discussions and deliberations on proposals that potentially constitute a personal or professional conflict of interest.
- f. There should also be monthly community meetings. Residents have a right to be informed about developments that impact their ward or neighborhood.
- g. A process should be established to obtain public feedback. The Local TIF and Zoning Board will incorporate public feedback into decision making.
- h. Information should be made available in writing and in the dominant languages of the ward or neighborhood residents.
- i. There should be community benefits tied to all development subsidies.

### 4. Transit

- a. Transit is currently inadequate.
- b. Improve, green, & expand transit options
- c. Housing and transportation go hand in hand.
- d. Fill holes in transit services
- e. Have a more dependable frequent schedule
- f. We need better schedules with more frequent arrivals and longer hours
  - i. Communities have been fighting route by route for better service, improved transfers, trained and supervised staff and operators, enhanced safety and properly maintained equipment.
    1. Little Village Environmental Organizer fought CTA and pulled down resources from elected officials to improve the Route 31 bus see <http://www.lvejo.org/our-accomplishments/transit-victory/>.
    2. South Chicago Community Leaders fought Metra and not only saved

but also lowered the fare on the Metra Electric and Rock Island lines.

3. Transit oriented development does not work when there are holes in service, unpredictable service, or when one cannot get home from a second shift job, appointments or events on public transit.

- g. We need more express buses; safer and more reliable CTA L routes; low cost affordable Metra access
- h. We need to acknowledge that the lack of transit access is the legacy of deliberate racist decisions meant to further segregation and also leads to increased racial profiling by law enforcement; harassment of youth/teenagers on the street, etc. [https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/built\\_environment/srtsnp\\_equitytransp\\_factsheet2015.ashx](https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/built_environment/srtsnp_equitytransp_factsheet2015.ashx)

5. Big Institutions (Universities, health systems, etc.)

- a. Big institutions like the University of Chicago own so much property.
- b. We need to look at how big institutions are separate from our communities and also what it looks like when they integrate more into our communities.
- c. We need to look at what big institutions take from our community versus what they put in. We need a formal process to negotiate binding community benefits agreements with large institutions.

6. Housing

- a. Ownership: We need to more actively manage having the right mix of owners and renters.
- b. We must push back against corporate ownership and mismanagement of whole blocks and large pieces of land.
- c. We must deal with bad landlords and abusive tenants who hurt our communities.
- d. Housing discrimination is still a problem, and we are still being redlined. We must have a better enforcement plan for the enforcement of fair housing, community reinvestment, and other laws.
- e. Subsidize and reward making housing greener
- f. Relief for residents to keep them housed.
- g. Housing and transportation go hand in hand.
- h. Control rents; make more housing truly affordable.
- i. Give financial and maintenance support to homeowner to make them resilient.
- j. We need to fight displacement and discrimination to keep our neighbors here.
- k. Stabilize communities by giving people more opportunities to own their housing. Target these programs to areas where there are more renters and less

owners.

- l. More and better outreach about housing programs, especially in communities experiencing displacement.
- m. We need more supports and education for new homeowners, especially around tax appeal systems and financing.
- n. Automatic property tax relief for long time homeowners, especially in areas with rapidly rising prices.
- o. More oversight of banks and other lenders with consequences for poor behavior and easy access to detailed information about how lenders are performing.

## 7. Learning & Environment for Children & Adults

- a. We need to improve the quality of life and social opportunities for our youth today.
- b. We need to create a better youth culture in which young people learn leadership and morals
- c. We need to fix and replace our school buildings and facilities.
- d. We need robust technical education and training for the trades so that students can prepare for employment and careers.
- e. We need to engage youth and families block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, school by school, pew by pew, etc.
- f. We need park resources like pools and other healthy places for young people to go equitably distributed throughout the city. Resources are currently very concentrated on the North Side.
- g. We need to have a plan for 8th grade dropouts. We need to fix the way that schools fail them before they drop out.

## 8. Wealth Building

- a. We need to build industries and have business incubators in every community area.
- b. We need training, apprenticeships, and career pathways to good paying jobs with benefits.
- c. We need more local hiring.
- d. There are so many broken promises and so much discrimination from employers (i.e. train car assembly plant)
- e. We need funding to train, certify and hire local residents to remediate contaminated sites.
- f. We need vibrant community level economies in which needs are met and more money stays in the community.
- g. We need to prepare youth and others to be successful in a variety of different

types of careers in industries that meet community needs.

h. We need to create a better community self image for ourselves.

## 9. Public Safety

a. None of these ideas will work if we don't feel safe.

b. We need some sort of extra security that treats residents well and de-escalates situations.

## 10. Health & Environmental Justice

a. We need comprehensive mental and physical health care that treats the whole person and community.

b. We need actionable plans to close the gap in health expectancies between zip codes.

c. We need to study the cumulative effects of multiple heavy polluters in specific areas of the city and deconcentrate them.

d. The city must look for solutions to the problems of environmental racism pointed out by the HUD investigation, not argue about whether these problems exist or HUD's legal standing

e. We need to make sure that industry does not endanger residents be it through pollution, traffic, odors, or other effects.

f. The Southside is not a dumping ground. Stop using it as one.

g. We need more trees and more equity of tree resources.

(<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/environment/ct-chicago-trees-equity-20220612-prpuxgsabzc2fa4fnwnyf4fbku-story.html>)

h. We need better park resources.

i. We need to clean up existing pollution.

j. We need to tax polluters as a source of dedicated funding for a just transition to greener technologies.

k. We need to better prepare our communities for the crisis created by climate change.

## 11. More Social & Community Resources

a. More gyms and youth centers

b. More entertainment, fun, and culture

c. Coffee shops and safe public spaces to hang out in, less isolation

d. Places to go out in the community, spending money there

## 12. More & Better Jobs

a. Remove obstacles to jobs, more open hiring

b. Better apprenticeships, training and career paths. Improve where they are

- located and how to find them.
- c. More Union jobs, Green jobs, and Creative or Art jobs
- d. Support and create more worker owned businesses
- e. Living wage jobs at or above prevailing wage that can support a family and regular raises.
- f. Concrete steps, working with the community, to attract more businesses that offer better employment.

### 13. Businesses, Services, & Quality of Life

- a. Technical assistance, incubation, promotion, and financial support for both new and existing businesses
- b. Remove barriers to entrepreneurship
- c. More access to financing and real estate.
- d. Eliminate deserts where there is lack of access to food and other services
- e. Help more dollars to stay in the community instead of being extracted or having those dollars go elsewhere.
- f. We need fight displacement and discrimination to keep our neighbors here.
- g. We need an organized way to keep the community clean and livable.
- h. We need better control over land and real estate so that buildings and land can be put to appropriate use rather than being warehoused or put to a use that negatively affects the community.

#### **Signed Onto Organizationally: In Alphabetical Order**

Alliance of the Southeast, ASE, Amalia Nieto-Gomez, Executive Director  
 Bridges/Puentes, Samuel Corona, Founding Member  
 Central South Shore Area Council Linda Young, President  
 Coalition For a Southworks CBA,  
 Jeffrey Manor Community Council, Marie Collins-Wright, Vice President  
 People's Council of Southeast Chicago, Linda Gonzalez, Lead Facilitator  
 South Chicago Neighbors, Emily Licon, Member

#### **Signed On Individually, Organization Listed for Identification Purposes Only**

Yessenia Baltazar, Southeast Environmental Taskforce  
 LaDonna Calhoun  
 Hazel Colar  
 Delia Cruz, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
 Ivan Cruz, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
 Onaje Douglas, Metropolitan Family Services  
 Shawn Gill  
 Mia H  
 Rachel Hardy, Southeast Environmental Taskforce  
 Maria Hernandez  
 Kim Lewis



Renee Nowlin, Secretary, KECS Block Club Association  
Joann Podkul, SE Chicago Historical Society  
Michelle Royster, Director, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
Enrique Sanchez, Southeast Environmental TaskForce

January 13, 2023  
Chicago Plan Commission  
City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St.  
Chicago, IL 60602

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) submits this written testimony in support of the resolution for We Will Chicago and urges Commissioners to adopt the framework plan.

We Will Chicago is the first citywide plan the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has undertaken since the 1960s. When the last citywide plan was created, many communities were excluded from fully participating in civic life and planning. MPC believes that the We Will Chicago planning process has included some of the most robust and creative engagement strategies that DPD has employed. The impact of that public participation is apparent in the fact that the framework plan before us today positions Equity and Resiliency as its two core principles, has a pillar dedicated to Civic and Community Engagement. It also includes an acknowledgement of the role city planning has played in past and ongoing harms.

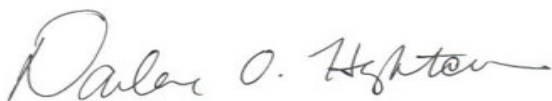
For too long, Chicago has lacked a unifying vision for what we want this city to be, and the values we want to drive public decisions. We Will Chicago captures this vision through its guiding principles, themes, goals, and objectives. This plan will serve as a critical guiding document for Chicago moving forward, and through implementation can shape future decisions related to programming, policy, investments, budgets, land use, infrastructure, and capital planning.

MPC has been a partner, advisor, and participant in We Will Chicago on various aspects of the planning process. We co-developed the pre-planning workshops that helped shape the themes and structure of the planning process, participated on the Advisory and Public Health and Safety Research Teams, created a meeting in a box toolkit to strengthen public engagement, and facilitated working groups to provide recommendations on historical reckoning and implementation. Through our participation and support, we have seen first-hand the effort and intention put into the planning process by staff within DPD, the Mayor's Office, and other city agencies.

The City has committed to several actions to advance We Will Chicago. The Mayor's Office plans to create an implementation steering committee and require city departments to create action plans to implement objectives from the plan. Departments will also be expected to show how We Will Chicago fits in with their newly required Racial Equity Action Plans and their annual budgets. DPD will align future neighborhood planning with We Will Chicago, beginning with the upcoming Central Area Plan. These implementation steps are consistent with the plan's principles, and it is encouraging to see these public commitments.

Chicago Plan Commission approval will signal to Chicago residents that their public servants value their vision for the City. It will also empower departments and staff to implement the plan and integrate its guiding principles of Equity and Resiliency into their own projects and decisions. MPC urges the commissioners to vote in support of the We Will Chicago Framework Plan.

Sincerely,



Darlene Oliver Hightower  
President and CEO  
Metropolitan Planning Council

## Board of Governors

*Chair*

Paul C. Carlisle •

*Vice Chair Development*

Kyle Barnett •

*Vice Chair Development*

Ellen Carnahan •

*Vice Chair Development*

Janet Chess •

*Treasurer*

Ramiro J. Atristain-Carrión •

*General Counsel*

David Williams •

*Immediate Past Chair*

Melissa Washington •

Erica Marquez Avitia

Carol Ross Barney

Meena Beyers •

Ciere Boatright

Matthew Brewer •

Todd C. Brown

Christopher B. Burke

Eileen Chin

Lester Crown

Zena Diggs

Polly Eldringhoff

Nedra Sims Fears

Manuel Flores •

Alejandra Garza

Janet R. González Tudor

Linda Goodman

Laritz Lopez

Bernard Loyd

Mary K. Ludgin

James E. Mann

Lee M. Mitchell

David Mook

Daryl Newell

Jim O'Leary

Sameer Patel

Frank D. Pellicori

Julian G. Posada •

Elle Ramel

George A. Ranney, Jr.

Matthew R. Reilein •

Robert G. Reiter, Jr.

Alana Ward Robinson

Unmi Song

Bruce W. Taylor

Michael A. Thomas

Jessica Droste Yagan •

## Executive Advisors

Carol L. Bernick

*Polished Nickel Capital Management LLC*

John Bucksbaum

*Bucksbaum Retail Properties, LLC*

Jonathan C. Bunge

*Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP*

David Casper

*BMO Financial Group*

Robert M. Chapman  
*CenterPoint Properties*

Keating Crown  
*Sterling Bay*

Marsha Cruzan  
*U.S. Bank*

J. Michael Drew  
*Structured Development, LLC*

Robert Frentzel  
*CIBC U.S.*

John S. Gates, Jr.  
*TradeLane Properties, LLC*

Nancy S. Gerrie

Ari F. Glass  
*Mansueto Office Inc.*

Steven N. Miller  
*Origin Ventures*

Charles J. Moore  
*The Banc Funds*

J. Marshall Peck  
*InterPark Holdings LLC*

Joan Rockey  
*The Mather Group*

Mark G. Sander  
*Old National Bancorp*

Katherine M. Scherer  
*Deloitte LLP*

Scott Swanson  
*PNC Illinois*

Stephan B. Tanda  
*AptarGroup, Inc.*

Edward J. Wehmer  
*Wintrust Financial Corp.*

Theodore Weldon  
*Lendlease*

## President & CEO

Darlene Oliver Hightower •

*Executive Committee* •

## Joint Public Comment on the proposed resolution to adopt the We Will Chicago Draft Framework Plan

Chris White <chris@asechicago.org>

Wed 1/11/2023 8:19 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

Cc: Kam Buckner Press <PRESS@kamformayor.com>;Team@gogreenchicago.com  
<Team@gogreenchicago.com>;brandonjjohn@gmail.com  
<brandonjjohn@gmail.com>;info@sophiaforchicago.com  
<info@sophiaforchicago.com>;info@lightfootforchicago.com  
<info@lightfootforchicago.com>;electrodsawyer@gmail.com  
<electrodsawyer@gmail.com>;media@paulvallas2023.com  
<media@paulvallas2023.com>;paulgvallas@gmail.com  
<paulgvallas@gmail.com>;Mayor@electwilliewilson.com <Mayor@electwilliewilson.com>;Danielle  
Simpson <Danielle@gogreenchicago.com>;alexis@brandonforchicago.com  
<alexis@brandonforchicago.com>;zbrahmbhatt21@gmail.com  
<zbrahmbhatt21@gmail.com>;robertwprevidi@gmail.com <robertwprevidi@gmail.com>;Amalia  
NietoGomez <amalia@asechicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

Dear Chicago Plan Commission

Please see below our joint public comment on the proposed resolution to adopt the We Will Chicago Draft Framework Plan that is on the January 19th 2023 agenda.

Please confirm receipt.

The signatories to the comment had previously submitted these comments to DPD, but they do not seem to have impacted the draft submitted to the Plan Commission for consideration.

We respectfully ask that the Plan Commission delay adoption until more of the 600+ policy ideas that community leaders took time to propose during the planning process can be integrated into the plan.

Chris White

Organizing Director

*Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE)*

**WE MOVED! NOTE NEW ADDRESS!**

**8944 S Commercial Ave Suite 1. Chicago, IL 60617**

773-221-8908 (Office) | (847) 868-3509 ( Work Cell)

[www.asechicago.org](http://www.asechicago.org)

[facebook.com/AllianceOfTheSoutheast](https://facebook.com/AllianceOfTheSoutheast) | [twitter.com/asechicago](https://twitter.com/asechicago)

# **Southeast & Beyond: We Will Our Residents' Plan For Southeast Chicago & The City**

## Summary Outline of Major Themes, Topics, & Desired Outcomes from Southeast We Will Meetings on the City Plan

[bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond](https://bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond)

For a few years ending in 2022, community leaders in Southeast Chicago leaders held community meetings around We Will Chicago, which was promised to be a participatory process to draft a new city plan.

Unfortunately, outside of some data and vague goals, most of the 600 policy recommendations ( [bit.ly/WeWilChicagoPolicyIdeas](https://bit.ly/WeWilChicagoPolicyIdeas) ) made by leaders from across the city were not included in the draft plan that was released in mid July 2022 ( <https://bit.ly/WeWillJulyDraft> ). In contrast, many pages of the City of Chicago 1966 Comprehensive Plan ( [bit.ly/1966ChiPlan](https://bit.ly/1966ChiPlan) ), have very specific recommendations that often name specific infrastructure and institutions that are to be built and often with specific funding sources named.

Therefore, a committee of the Southeast Chicago We Will Participants have put together this outline of key recommendations that our neighbors have made during this process.

This document is a good faith attempt to collect the strongest points of agreement that were articulated at the Southeast community meetings and to turn them into clear and actionable recommendations. Most if not all of the original raw notes from the community process can be seen here: [bit.ly/sewwcrawnotes](https://bit.ly/sewwcrawnotes)

We ask you to sign on to our respectful call for the City of Chicago to incorporate our recommendations into the next draft of the We Will Chicago Plan by the beginning of the formal public comment process this fall. And we ask the city to partner with us to make these recommendations and a new, more equitable Chicago a reality. To sign on as an individual and/or organization, please go to [bit.ly/seplansignon](https://bit.ly/seplansignon)

If a detail, point, or nuance that was included or left out prevents you from signing on, we still encourage you to contact Alliance of the Southeast ( [asechicago.org](https://asechicago.org) ) for support and technical assistance in making your own public comment.

### 1. Food Access

- a. We need to eliminate Food Deserts
  - i. Food deserts are identified in many ways.
  - ii. Lack of fresh fruit, vegetables and meat.

- iii. 500 people or 80% of people must live near a large grocery store to not be in a food desert.
  - iv. We must admit that race has been a factor in placement of grocery stores in the past.
- b. Communities are asking for:
- i. Stores that are two to three blocks walking distances from home.
  - ii. Stores that are owned by people that look like them and understand their food preferences.
  - iii. Choices of stores, fruit stands, meat markets, full service.
  - iv. Help with planting vegetable gardens, using the city owned vacant lots.
  - v. Mobile groceries such as food trucks and grocery delivery.
- c. The Health department should respond to community complaints of lack of food and how it impacts the health of their clients and make recommendations that stores are placed in food deserts.
- d. Residents have a role to play in supporting nearby stores.
- e. Supply chain design (exporting/importing, agribusiness) and issues have hurt our access to food in existing stores even though we are surrounded by fertile farmland.
- f. The problem of lack of food access is related to how TIF dollars and public subsidies have been managed.
- g. There needs to be a consequence for store chains that pull out of subsidized areas then want subsidies, zoning changes, etc. in wealthier and whiter areas. Investing in underserved areas must be a condition of benefits and accommodations in other areas.
- h. Produce, dairy, poultry, seafood and meats should be fresh, affordable, and meet or exceed all established health, sanitation, and food safety standards and requirements.
- i. There should be greater investment in community owned or controlled stores, vegetable gardens, and farmers markets that take Linc.

## 2. Community Decision Making, Zoning Amendments, Tax Increment Financing

- a. We need a real communication plan to keep more neighbors aware and engaged
- b. We need more engagement with officials and decision makers as well as more information about what resources are available.
- c. We need improved models of participatory decision making in which we know that what we say actually makes a difference in what happens. We want a real seat at the table where the real decisions are made

### 3. We need better decision making about (TIF) and Other Public Subsidies

- a. City needs to increase transparency and stop taking TIF funds without community notification and engagement . All proposed TIF Fund transfers and developments are subject to the review of the Local TIF & Zoning Board.
- b. TIF and Zoning decisions should all be made by impacted residents, not politicians, corporations and a select few. This recommendation aligns with the City's plans to increase place-based decision making.
- c. Every ward should have an elected Local TIF & Zoning board overseeing public subsidies and land use . The Local TIF Board will review Redevelopment Agreements, Community Benefits Agreements, Zoning Amendments.
- d. The Local TIF & Zoning Board will establish a Good Neighbor Policy and work with stakeholders on policy education and compliance.
- e. Local TIF & Zoning Boards will have policies and procedures that protect the public from conflicts of interest. Board members will be required to recuse themselves from discussions and deliberations on proposals that potentially constitute a personal or professional conflict of interest.
- f. There should also be monthly community meetings. Residents have a right to be informed about developments that impact their ward or neighborhood.
- g. A process should be established to obtain public feedback. The Local TIF and Zoning Board will incorporate public feedback into decision making.
- h. Information should be made available in writing and in the dominant languages of the ward or neighborhood residents.
- i. There should be community benefits tied to all development subsidies.

### 4. Transit

- a. Transit is currently inadequate.
- b. Improve, green, & expand transit options
- c. Housing and transportation go hand in hand.
- d. Fill holes in transit services
- e. Have a more dependable frequent schedule
- f. We need better schedules with more frequent arrivals and longer hours
  - i. Communities have been fighting route by route for better service, improved transfers, trained and supervised staff and operators, enhanced safety and properly maintained equipment.
    1. Little Village Environmental Organizer fought CTA and pulled down resources from elected officials to improve the Route 31 bus see <http://www.lvejo.org/our-accomplishments/transit-victory/>.
    2. South Chicago Community Leaders fought Metra and not only saved

but also lowered the fare on the Metra Electric and Rock Island lines.

3. Transit oriented development does not work when there are holes in service, unpredictable service, or when one cannot get home from a second shift job, appointments or events on public transit.

- g. We need more express buses; safer and more reliable CTA L routes; low cost affordable Metra access
- h. We need to acknowledge that the lack of transit access is the legacy of deliberate racist decisions meant to further segregation and also leads to increased racial profiling by law enforcement; harassment of youth/teenagers on the street, etc. [https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/built\\_environment/srtsnp\\_equitytransp\\_factsheet2015.ashx](https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/built_environment/srtsnp_equitytransp_factsheet2015.ashx)

5. Big Institutions (Universities, health systems, etc.)

- a. Big institutions like the University of Chicago own so much property.
- b. We need to look at how big institutions are separate from our communities and also what it looks like when they integrate more into our communities.
- c. We need to look at what big institutions take from our community versus what they put in. We need a formal process to negotiate binding community benefits agreements with large institutions.

6. Housing

- a. Ownership: We need to more actively manage having the right mix of owners and renters.
- b. We must push back against corporate ownership and mismanagement of whole blocks and large pieces of land.
- c. We must deal with bad landlords and abusive tenants who hurt our communities.
- d. Housing discrimination is still a problem, and we are still being redlined. We must have a better enforcement plan for the enforcement of fair housing, community reinvestment, and other laws.
- e. Subsidize and reward making housing greener
- f. Relief for residents to keep them housed.
- g. Housing and transportation go hand in hand.
- h. Control rents; make more housing truly affordable.
- i. Give financial and maintenance support to homeowner to make them resilient.
- j. We need to fight displacement and discrimination to keep our neighbors here.
- k. Stabilize communities by giving people more opportunities to own their housing. Target these programs to areas where there are more renters and less

owners.

- l. More and better outreach about housing programs, especially in communities experiencing displacement.
- m. We need more supports and education for new homeowners, especially around tax appeal systems and financing.
- n. Automatic property tax relief for long time homeowners, especially in areas with rapidly rising prices.
- o. More oversight of banks and other lenders with consequences for poor behavior and easy access to detailed information about how lenders are performing.

## 7. Learning & Environment for Children & Adults

- a. We need to improve the quality of life and social opportunities for our youth today.
- b. We need to create a better youth culture in which young people learn leadership and morals
- c. We need to fix and replace our school buildings and facilities.
- d. We need robust technical education and training for the trades so that students can prepare for employment and careers.
- e. We need to engage youth and families block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, school by school, pew by pew, etc.
- f. We need park resources like pools and other healthy places for young people to go equitably distributed throughout the city. Resources are currently very concentrated on the North Side.
- g. We need to have a plan for 8th grade dropouts. We need to fix the way that schools fail them before they drop out.

## 8. Wealth Building

- a. We need to build industries and have business incubators in every community area.
- b. We need training, apprenticeships, and career pathways to good paying jobs with benefits.
- c. We need more local hiring.
- d. There are so many broken promises and so much discrimination from employers (i.e. train car assembly plant)
- e. We need funding to train, certify and hire local residents to remediate contaminated sites.
- f. We need vibrant community level economies in which needs are met and more money stays in the community.
- g. We need to prepare youth and others to be successful in a variety of different



types of careers in industries that meet community needs.

h. We need to create a better community self image for ourselves.

## 9. Public Safety

a. None of these ideas will work if we don't feel safe.

b. We need some sort of extra security that treats residents well and de-escalates situations.

## 10. Health & Environmental Justice

a. We need comprehensive mental and physical health care that treats the whole person and community.

b. We need actionable plans to close the gap in health expectancies between zip codes.

c. We need to study the cumulative effects of multiple heavy polluters in specific areas of the city and deconcentrate them.

d. The city must look for solutions to the problems of environmental racism pointed out by the HUD investigation, not argue about whether these problems exist or HUD's legal standing

e. We need to make sure that industry does not endanger residents be it through pollution, traffic, odors, or other effects.

f. The Southside is not a dumping ground. Stop using it as one.

g. We need more trees and more equity of tree resources.

(<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/environment/ct-chicago-trees-equity-20220612-prpuxgsabzc2fa4fnwnyf4fbku-story.html>)

h. We need better park resources.

i. We need to clean up existing pollution.

j. We need to tax polluters as a source of dedicated funding for a just transition to greener technologies.

k. We need to better prepare our communities for the crisis created by climate change.

## 11. More Social & Community Resources

a. More gyms and youth centers

b. More entertainment, fun, and culture

c. Coffee shops and safe public spaces to hang out in, less isolation

d. Places to go out in the community, spending money there

## 12. More & Better Jobs

a. Remove obstacles to jobs, more open hiring

b. Better apprenticeships, training and career paths. Improve where they are

- located and how to find them.
- c. More Union jobs, Green jobs, and Creative or Art jobs
- d. Support and create more worker owned businesses
- e. Living wage jobs at or above prevailing wage that can support a family and regular raises.
- f. Concrete steps, working with the community, to attract more businesses that offer better employment.

### 13. Businesses, Services, & Quality of Life

- a. Technical assistance, incubation, promotion, and financial support for both new and existing businesses
- b. Remove barriers to entrepreneurship
- c. More access to financing and real estate.
- d. Eliminate deserts where there is lack of access to food and other services
- e. Help more dollars to stay in the community instead of being extracted or having those dollars go elsewhere.
- f. We need fight displacement and discrimination to keep our neighbors here.
- g. We need an organized way to keep the community clean and livable.
- h. We need better control over land and real estate so that buildings and land can be put to appropriate use rather than being warehoused or put to a use that negatively affects the community.

#### **Signed Onto Organizationally: In Alphabetical Order**

Alliance of the Southeast, ASE, Amalia Nieto-Gomez, Executive Director  
 Bridges/Puentes, Samuel Corona, Founding Member  
 Central South Shore Area Council Linda Young, President  
 Coalition For a Southworks CBA,  
 Jeffrey Manor Community Council, Marie Collins-Wright, Vice President  
 People's Council of Southeast Chicago, Linda Gonzalez, Lead Facilitator  
 South Chicago Neighbors, Emily Licon, Member

#### **Signed On Individually, Organization Listed for Identification Purposes Only**

Yessenia Baltazar, Southeast Environmental Taskforce  
 LaDonna Calhoun  
 Hazel Colar  
 Delia Cruz, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
 Ivan Cruz, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
 Onaje Douglas, Metropolitan Family Services  
 Shawn Gill  
 Mia H  
 Rachel Hardy, Southeast Environmental Taskforce  
 Maria Hernandez  
 Kim Lewis

Renee Nowlin, Secretary, KECS Block Club Association  
Joann Podkul, SE Chicago Historical Society  
Michelle Royster, Director, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
Enrique Sanchez, Southeast Environmental TaskForce

## We Will Plan Commission Public Comment for 2/16/2023 Planning Commission Hearing

Kevin Johnson, Jr <kevinj@workingfamilysolidarity.org>

Tue 2/14/2023 6:24 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

My Name is Kevin Johnson of Working Family Solidarity. We fight for equitable development in underserved and low income communities especially african americans and latinos. We believe the Plan Commission should delay the vote until most of the 600 policy recommendations made by leaders from across the city are included in the draft plan that was released in mid July 2022. Our Message to the Mayor Campaign video interviewed over 75 residents in the city and talked to hundreds more over the course of the last year. Most residents are unaware of the We will plan and its purpose/benefit for the immediate future. Residents also stated the untrustworthy and continuous lies about equitable development in their communities meant for the current residents. The policy ideas gathered helps ensure these issues that our communities have seen for decades can finally be addressed in a better way for current community residents. We must do better for Our communities that have been shut out for too long.

Kevin Johnson Jr.

Lead Organizer

Working Family Solidarity

1857 W. 19th Street

Chicago, IL 60608

312-686-7136

[www.workingfamilysolidarity.org](http://www.workingfamilysolidarity.org)

## Written Statement re: We Will Chicago Plan

Sendy S. <sendyliseth@gmail.com>

Tue 2/14/2023 8:41 PM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

[Warning: External email]

To the esteemed members of the Chicago Plan Commission:

I wanted to take a moment to respectfully request your full support of the We Will Chicago Plan and its implementation recommendations.

I had the honor to co-lead the Housing and Neighborhood Pillar. I can attest that the plan before you today is thorough and has the support of constituents from all corners of the city. The We Will Chicago Plan is a testament to the power of collective action. It shows how the people of Chicago can come together to shape the place they call home.

The Mayor's Office made it their mission to create a citywide plan that involves all City Agencies, a multitude of community groups, and people with lived experience. Although it was a significant undertaking, the plan you see today is the result of extensive visioning sessions and the inclusion of public feedback throughout each stage of the process.

The We Will Chicago Plan is a blueprint for a better Chicago for many years and generations to come.

Thank you for your time and service.

Cordially yours,

*Sendy Liseth Soto*  
Proud Chicago Resident

**Testimony from Amalia NietoGomez, Executive Director  
of the Alliance of the SouthEast (ASE)  
On the Proposed Resolution to Adopt the We Will Chicago Framework  
Plan Commission Meeting, 02/16/2023**

My name is Amalia NietoGomez and I am the Executive Director of Alliance of the Southeast (ASE).

I'm here today to express that the We Will Chicago Framework Plan needs to have more concrete steps and named resources to be effective.

ASE is a multicultural, interfaith, intergenerational coalition of churches, schools, businesses, and community organizations, all working together to address the challenges facing the neighborhoods of Southeast Chicago. We also organize the Coalition for a Southworks CBA, which has 30+ organizational members from across Chicago's southeast side working to ensure equitable development and environmental justice, and the Citywide Equitable Development Roundtable (CEDR), which involves 18 organizations from across the city.

We were one of the organizations that participated in good faith in the We Will Chicago Planning Process. We had four robust community meetings. We participated in the Pillar Research Team on Economic Development.

Unfortunately, most of the input that our organization and our community leaders took the time and energy to create, has been left out of the plan. The 600+ policy ideas that came out of the process are publicly available, but not at all integrated into the plan. Moreover, while ASE, Coalition for a South Works CBA, and many others engaged local residents in locations across Chicago, there were still gaps, and more that could be done to engage residents and local businesses at a local level (e.g. Special Service Areas, Invest South/West tables).

What we have instead, is a vague plan, that is not measurable in any way. It has no teeth, timeframes, budget, enforceability, or accountability. When this plan was announced, it was to fulfill resilience and racial equity goals. This plan won't live up to its goals unless it has measurable outcomes and accountability, similar to past City plans.

The We Will Plan needs to be more like previous plans- that had concrete steps and named resources.

The city could also put more attention and resources into existing planning initiatives, like "Good Neighbor" policies and existing neighborhood Quality of Life Initiatives. In addition, Chicago's Dept. of Planning and Development, could begin requiring legally binding Community Benefits Agreements before recommending projects to the Commission.

We believe that proposed framework should only be passed under the following conditions, at minimum:

1. That the 600+ policy recommendations, the specific recommendations that came out of each “pillar research team”, and also the recommendations made at We Will Chicago community meetings, should be explicitly incorporated into the plan.
2. That the Plan Commission is told which city departments will be in charge of implementing the goals and objectives of the plan and with identified sources of funding.
3. That the Plan Commission be given a clear, actionable implementation plan within six months of approval of the draft framework plan.

I appreciate the Plan Commission’s time and attention and invite you to follow up with our organization around any questions or concerns.

**Addendum:**

1. “Chicago Officials Are Pitching The First Citywide Plan In 60 Years. Is It The Key To Equitable Growth?” by Maxwell Evans, Block Club Chicago, 10-24-2022

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2022/10/24/chicago-officials-are-pitching-the-citys-first-comprehensive-plan-in-60-years-is-it-the-key-to-equitable-growth/>

2., Southeast Side Policy Recommendations, “Southeast We Will & Beyond”

<https://bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond>.

## Addendum #1

# Block Club Chicago

CITYWIDE

## Chicago Officials Are Pitching The First Citywide Plan In 60 Years. Is It The Key To Equitable Growth?

City planners set a goal of getting 10,000 people to give feedback on the "We Will Chicago" draft plan before public comment ends Nov. 1.

by Maxwell Evans, 9:17 AM CDT on Oct 24, 2022

CHICAGO — The public comment period on Chicago's first citywide plan in nearly 60 years will wind down over the next week as officials push to adopt the document they say will create a more equitable city over the next decade.

[We Will Chicago](#) is the first citywide plan to encourage equitable neighborhood growth since the [1966 Comprehensive Plan](#) crafted under Mayor Richard J. Daley. It's also the result of more direct input from residents than any other plan of its kind, officials said.

An "aspirational set of goals as one city has been missing from Chicago," planning Commissioner Maurice Cox said. "We never went through the patient exercise of asking people what they want as one city, not just as residents of a community area."

The plan will guide city officials' budget and policy priorities around eight pillars:

- [Economic development](#)
- [Arts and culture](#)
- [The environment, climate and energy](#)
- [Housing and neighborhoods](#)
- [Lifelong education](#)
- [Public health and safety](#)
- [Transportation and infrastructure](#)
- [Civic and community engagement](#)

Forty broad goals, from ensuring safe transportation to maintaining and expanding green space and eliminating a fear of violence, and 150 objectives to obtain those goals are included in the plan.

The document also includes 600 policy ideas that can serve as starting points for future legislation, budgets and changes to city programs — all of which could be used to implement aspects of the plan.

The planning department has requested \$1.5 million in the 2023 budget "to continue to refine the framework [plan] and to actually implement it," Cox said.

Public comments will guide changes to We Will before the document is presented to the Plan Commission in early 2023. Public input on the draft plan closes 11:59 p.m. Nov. 1.



To read the draft We Will plan in full, [click here](#). To fill out surveys on each of the plan's eight pillars, [click here](#).



**Credit:** Kayleigh Padar//Block Club Chicago Maurice Cox, the director of the Department of Planning and Development, speaks at the rededication of the Winthrop Family Historical Garden Oct. 15.

## What Is We Will?

Chicago's six-decade gap between citywide plans is "unusual," Cox said. For example, [in Washington state](#), cities and counties must review their plans at least once a decade and revise them if needed.

["When I got here"](#) and saw how segregated this city was, I thought, 'Are Chicagoans OK with this?'" Cox said. "Is this the city that they want, or is this the city they have received because of a set of decisions made decades and decades ago?"

We Will aims to address the inequities of past plans by finding a "consensus" among current residents, Cox said. Two years of discussion among neighbors and city staffers have led to the draft document now up for review.

The plan's objectives, such as promoting pathways to living-wage jobs or prioritizing the redevelopment of vacant property, may seem nebulous — but that's a feature, not a bug, officials said.

"A planning framework like this has to live beyond a single administration, to live beyond an aldermanic term," Cox said. "You can't so narrowly pin everyone in that you don't allow for time and circumstances to change. That's why it's a framework and not a set of policies."

The We Will plan’s focus on economic development, culture, public health and other quality-of-life issues is similar to that of the 29 [neighborhood plans shepherded by LISC Chicago](#) since 2000.

Existing community-led plans aren’t reflected in We Will, nor did they inform its creation, deputy planning Commissioner Kathy Dickhut said.

Neighborhood plans and We Will are different in scope but complementary, Cox said. The former are “extremely action-oriented” and often include specific project ideas, while the latter is “holistic” and “aspirational,” he said.

“The sum of those neighborhood plans did not constitute any collective agreement on what the city wants to be,” Cox said. “Coming out of this, we will have both [citywide and neighborhood plans]. That’s how cities can chart out a collective direction as well as satisfying local priorities.”



**Credit:** Colin Boyle/Block Club ChicagoA vibrant mural wraps around the building that houses Restaurant Nuevo León in Little Village along 26th Street on Sept. 28, 2022.

## How The Public Is Shaping The Plan

We Will is Chicago’s first citywide plan “drafted by neighborhood residents and community leaders,” officials said.

Resident input began with focus groups including about 200 people from across the city in the fall of 2020, Dickhut said.

Another 115 volunteers and 25 paid community partners representing city departments, ethnic organizations, environmental groups and more were [accepted to the plan's research and advisory teams](#), Dickhut said.

“Those research teams met once a month for about two hours about guiding principles, goals and objectives and policy ideas,” she said.

Each member committed about 24 hours to the plan over the course of a year.

Few Chicagoans from vulnerable populations — such as people experiencing homelessness, children younger than 18 and [people lacking internet access](#) — directly participated in drafting of the plan. The city relied on nonprofits and other advocates to relay the needs of the people they serve, Cox said.



**Credit:** Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago People walk on the 4400 block of South Cottage Grove Avenue in Grand Boulevard on Oct. 18, 2022.

Resident feedback will also guide changes before We Will is presented to the Plan Commission early next year, officials said.

The public comment period on the draft plan opened July 14 and had 8,872 responses as of Monday, according to the planning department. The city is aiming for 10,000 responses by Nov. 1, Cox said.

“The scores coming out of these surveys show high rates of agreement on all of these goals and most objectives,” said Gabriela Jirasek, assistant commissioner of community and digital engagement for the planning department.

About 3,310 responses have been submitted online, though if one person fills out a survey on each of the plan's pillars, they would be counted as eight responses.

The arts and culture and transportation and infrastructure surveys have been most popular online, 872 and 690 responses, respectively. All other surveys have received 200-400 responses each.

About 5,000 responses have been collected in-person at dozens of events across the city, Jirasek said. The in-person survey is less detailed, as “we didn’t want collecting demographic info to deter people” from responding, she said.

Since public comment began, the city has collected in-person survey responses from [unhoused Streetwise vendors](#) on two days when they picked up magazines to sell, Jirasek said.



Credit: Colin Boyle/Block Club Chicago Gregg Cole of Streetwise wears a mask in the Lincoln Square neighborhood in April 2020 while selling magazines.

## **An ‘Acknowledgement’ Of Racism, Not A ‘Reckoning’**

The We Will plan’s intro includes six pages about Chicago’s historical inequities around policing, redlining, school closures, industrial pollution and more.

The section is intended to inform residents who aren’t familiar with the disinvestment and systemic racism that have created unequal living conditions across Chicago, officials said.

In response to the inequities, various planning objectives explicitly focus on communities of color and communities that have experienced decades of disinvestment, which are often one and the same.

Even as city planners touted We Will as an admission of the city’s role in institutional racism, Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s administration called the federal government’s [accusations of institutional racism](#) “absurd”

and vowed to fight any attempts to enforce civil rights law. The Lightfoot administration backed off last week and [entered settlement discussions after community pushback](#).

This summer, federal housing officials found the city's planning and zoning decisions violated Black and Latino residents' civil rights over decades, as officials moved polluters from white communities into nonwhite neighborhoods.

But We Will frames the environmental inequities as a function of geography and infrastructure that happen to leave people of color more vulnerable to pollution, rather than a choice to benefit white residents at the expense of Black and Latino Chicagoans.

The city's clustering of industry in nonwhite communities is "the product of a century where our industries were laid out along rail lines and transportation lines," Cox said.

We Will doesn't allow city officials to "yank up all the [train] tracks and say, 'We're no longer going to put manufacturing here,'" Cox said. But with objectives such as studying [the cumulative impact of pollution](#) on overburdened communities, the plan can set the stage for "a green and sustainable future," he said.

The plan's acknowledgment of institutional racism "is not a reckoning process" that seeks to rectify past harm and prevent future harm, Cox said.

"It's an acknowledgement that recognizes the city's role," he said. "What the city can do, that's yet to come."

"We all are somewhat responsible for the mess we're in, and [for] a project like We Will, you have to own it in order to try and go to a different place," Cox said.

Lightfoot could not be reached for an interview.

[Subscribe to Block Club Chicago](#), an independent, 501(c)(3), journalist-run newsroom. Every dime we make funds reporting from Chicago's neighborhoods.

Source: <https://blockclubchicago.org/2022/10/24/chicago-officials-are-pitching-the-citys-first-comprehensive-plan-in-60-years-is-it-the-key-to-equitable-growth/>

## Addendum #2

# Southeast & Beyond: We Will

## Our Residents' Plan For Southeast Chicago & The City

### Summary Outline of Major Themes, Topics, & Desired Outcomes from Southeast We Will Meetings on the City Plan

[bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond](https://bit.ly/wewillseandbeyond)

For a few years ending in 2022, community leaders in Southeast Chicago<sup>1</sup> leaders held community meetings around We Will Chicago, which was promised to be a participatory process to draft a new city plan.

Unfortunately, outside of some data and vague goals, most of the 600 policy recommendations ( [bit.ly/WeWilChicagoPolicyIdeas](https://bit.ly/WeWilChicagoPolicyIdeas) ) made by leaders from across the city were not included in the draft plan that was released in mid July 2022 ( <https://bit.ly/WeWillJulyDraft> ). In contrast, many pages of the City of Chicago 1966 Comprehensive Plan ( [bit.ly/1966ChiPlan](https://bit.ly/1966ChiPlan) ), have very specific recommendations that often name specific infrastructure and institutions that are to be built and often with specific funding sources named.

Therefore, a committee of the Southeast Chicago We Will Participants have put together this outline of key recommendations that our neighbors have made during this process.<sup>2</sup>

This document is a good faith attempt to collect the strongest points of agreement that were articulated at the Southeast community meetings and to turn them into clear and actionable recommendations. Most if not all of the original raw notes from the community process can be seen here: [bit.ly/sewwcrawnotes](https://bit.ly/sewwcrawnotes)

We ask you to sign on to our respectful call for the City of Chicago to incorporate our recommendations into the next draft of the We Will Chicago Plan by the beginning of the formal public comment process this fall. And we ask the city to partner with us to make these recommendations and a new, more equitable Chicago a reality. To sign on as an individual and/or organization, please go to [bit.ly/seplansignon](https://bit.ly/seplansignon)

---

<sup>1</sup> This document is based on community conversations that mostly happened with Chicago residents in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 10th wards but also some other communities roughly South of the Loop and East of the Dan Ryan.

<sup>2</sup> The city may also want to talk to other groups that have been part of planning outside of the We Will Process such as the Citywide Equitable Development Roundtable's joint public input statement, the LISC Quality of Life Plans, and the Coalition For A Southworks CBA Coalition's Good Neighbor Policy.

If a detail, point, or nuance that was included or left out prevents you from signing on, we still encourage you to contact Alliance of the Southeast ( [asechicago.org](http://asechicago.org) ) for support and technical assistance in making your own public comment.

## 1. Food Access

- a. We need to eliminate Food Deserts
  - i. Food deserts are identified in many ways.
  - ii. Lack of fresh fruit, vegetables and meat.
  - iii. 500 people or 80% of people must live near a large grocery store to not be in a food desert.
  - iv. We must admit that race has been a factor in placement of grocery stores in the past.
- b. Communities are asking for:
  - i. Stores that are two to three blocks walking distances from home.
  - ii. Stores that are owned by people that look like them and understand their food preferences.
  - iii. Choices of stores, fruit stands, meat markets, full service.
  - iv. Help with planting vegetable gardens, using the city owned vacant lots.
  - v. Mobile groceries such as food trucks and grocery delivery.
- c. The Health department should respond to community complaints of lack of food and how it impacts the health of their clients and make recommendations that stores are placed in food deserts.
- d. Residents have a role to play in supporting nearby stores.
- e. Supply chain design (exporting/importing, agribusiness) and issues have hurt our access to food in existing stores even though we are surrounded by fertile farmland.
- f. The problem of lack of food access is related to how TIF dollars and public subsidies have been managed.
- g. There needs to be a consequence for store chains that pull out of subsidized areas then want subsidies, zoning changes, etc. in wealthier and whiter areas. Investing in underserved areas must be a condition of benefits and accommodations in other areas.
- h. Produce, dairy, poultry, seafood and meats should be fresh, affordable, and meet or exceed all established health, sanitation, and food safety standards and requirements.
- i. There should be greater investment in community owned or controlled stores, vegetable gardens, and farmers markets that take Linc.

2. Community Decision Making, Zoning Amendments, Tax Increment Financing
  - a. We need a real communication plan to keep more neighbors aware and engaged
  - b. We need more engagement with officials and decision makers as well as more information about what resources are available.
  - c. We need improved models of participatory decision making in which we know that what we say actually makes a difference in what happens. We want a real seat at the table where the real decisions are made
  
3. We need better decision making about (TIF) and Other Public Subsidies
  - a. City needs to increase transparency and stop taking TIF funds without community notification and engagement . All proposed TIF Fund transfers and developments are subject to the review of the Local TIF & Zoning Board.
  - b. TIF and Zoning decisions should all be made by impacted residents, not politicians, corporations and a select few. This recommendation aligns with the City's plans to increase place-based decision making.
  - c. Every ward should have an elected Local TIF & Zoning board overseeing public subsidies and land use . The Local TIF Board will review Redevelopment Agreements, Community Benefits Agreements, Zoning Amendments.
  - d. The Local TIF & Zoning Board will establish a Good Neighbor Policy and work with stakeholders on policy education and compliance.
  - e. Local TIF & Zoning Boards will have policies and procedures that protect the public from conflicts of interest. Board members will be required to recuse themselves from discussions and deliberations on proposals that potentially constitute a personal or professional conflict of interest.
  - f. There should also be monthly community meetings. Residents have a right to be informed about developments that impact their ward or neighborhood.
  - g. A process should be established to obtain public feedback. The Local TIF and Zoning Board will incorporate public feedback into decision making.
  - h. Information should be made available in writing and in the dominant languages of the ward or neighborhood residents.
  - i. There should be community benefits tied to all development subsidies.
  
4. Transit
  - a. Transit is currently inadequate.
  - b. Improve, green, & expand transit options
  - c. Housing and transportation go hand in hand.



- d. Fill holes in transit services
- e. Have a more dependable frequent schedule
- f. We need better schedules with more frequent arrivals and longer hours
  - i. Communities have been fighting route by route for better service, improved transfers, trained and supervised staff and operators, enhanced safety and properly maintained equipment.
    - 1. Little Village Environmental Organizer fought CTA and pulled down resources from elected officials to improve the Route 31 bus see <http://www.lvejo.org/our-accomplishments/transit-victory/>.
    - 2. South Chicago Community Leaders fought Metra and not only saved but also lowered the fare on the Metra Electric and Rock Island lines.
    - 3. Transit oriented development does not work when there are holes in service, unpredictable service, or when one cannot get home from a second shift job, appointments or events on public transit.
- g. We need more express buses; safer and more reliable CTA L routes; low cost affordable Metra access
- h. We need to acknowledge that the lack of transit access is the legacy of deliberate racist decisions meant to further segregation and also leads to increased racial profiling by law enforcement; harassment of youth/teenagers on the street, etc.  
[https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/built\\_environment/srtsnp\\_equitytransp\\_factsheet2015.ashx](https://www.apha.org/~media/files/pdf/topics/environment/built_environment/srtsnp_equitytransp_factsheet2015.ashx)

## 5. Big Institutions (Universities, health systems, etc.)

- a. Big institutions like the University of Chicago own so much property.
- b. We need to look at how big institutions are separate from our communities and also what it looks like when they integrate more into our communities.
- c. We need to look at what big institutions take from our community versus what they put in. We need a formal process to negotiate binding community benefits agreements with large institutions.

## 6. Housing

- a. Ownership: We need to more actively manage having the right mix of owners and renters.
- b. We must push back against corporate ownership and mismanagement of whole blocks and large pieces of land.
- c. We must deal with bad landlords and abusive tenants who hurt our communities.

- d. Housing discrimination is still a problem, and we are still being redlined. We must have a better enforcement plan for the enforcement of fair housing, community reinvestment, and other laws.
- e. Subsidize and reward making housing greener
- f. Relief for residents to keep them housed.
- g. Housing and transportation go hand in hand.
- h. Control rents; make more housing truly affordable.
- i. Give financial and maintenance support to homeowner to make them resilient.
- j. We need to fight displacement and discrimination to keep our neighbors here.
- k. Stabilize communities by giving people more opportunities to own their housing. Target these programs to areas where there are more renters and less owners.
- l. More and better outreach about housing programs, especially in communities experiencing displacement.
- m. We need more supports and education for new homeowners, especially around tax appeal systems and financing.
- n. Automatic property tax relief for long time homeowners, especially in areas with rapidly rising prices.
- o. More oversight of banks and other lenders with consequences for poor behavior and easy access to detailed information about how lenders are performing.

## 7. Learning & Environment for Children & Adults

- a. We need to improve the quality of life and social opportunities for our youth today.
- b. We need to create a better youth culture in which young people learn leadership and morals
- c. We need to fix and replace our school buildings and facilities.
- d. We need robust technical education and training for the trades so that students can prepare for employment and careers.
- e. We need to engage youth and families block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, school by school, pew by pew, etc.
- f. We need park resources like pools and other healthy places for young people to go equitably distributed throughout the city. Resources are currently very concentrated on the North Side.
- g. We need to have a plan for 8th grade dropouts. We need to fix the way that schools fail them before they drop out.

## 8. Wealth Building

- a. We need to build industries and have business incubators in every community area.
- b. We need training, apprenticeships, and career pathways to good paying jobs with benefits.
- c. We need more local hiring.
- d. There are so many broken promises and so much discrimination from employers (i.e. train car assembly plant)
- e. We need funding to train, certify and hire local residents to remediate contaminated sites.
- f. We need vibrant community level economies in which needs are met and more money stays in the community.
- g. We need to prepare youth and others to be successful in a variety of different types of careers in industries that meet community needs.
- h. We need to create a better community self image for ourselves.

## 9. Public Safety

- a. None of these ideas will work if we don't feel safe.
- b. We need some sort of extra security that treats residents well and de-escalates situations.

## 10. Health & Environmental Justice

- a. We need comprehensive mental and physical health care that treats the whole person and community.
- b. We need actionable plans to close the gap in health expectancies between zip codes.
- c. We need to study the cumulative effects of multiple heavy polluters in specific areas of the city and deconcentrate them.
- d. The city must look for solutions to the problems of environmental racism pointed out by the HUD investigation, not argue about whether these problems exist or HUD's legal standing
- e. We need to make sure that industry does not endanger residents be it through pollution, traffic, odors, or other effects.
- f. The Southside is not a dumping ground. Stop using it as one.
- g. We need more trees and more equity of tree resources.  
(<https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/environment/ct-chicago-trees-equity-20220612-prpuxgsabzc2fa4fnwnyf4fbku-story.html>)
- h. We need better park resources.
- i. We need to clean up existing pollution.
- j. We need to tax polluters as a source of dedicated funding for a just

- transition to greener technologies.
- k. We need to better prepare our communities for the crisis created by climate change.

#### 11. More Social & Community Resources

- a. More gyms and youth centers
- b. More entertainment, fun, and culture
- c. Coffee shops and safe public spaces to hang out in, less isolation
- d. Places to go out in the community, spending money there

#### 12. More & Better Jobs

- a. Remove obstacles to jobs, more open hiring
- b. Better apprenticeships, training and career paths. Improve where they are located and how to find them.
- c. More Union jobs, Green jobs, and Creative or Art jobs
- d. Support and create more worker owned businesses
- e. Living wage jobs at or above prevailing wage that can support a family and regular raises.
- f. Concrete steps, working with the community, to attract more businesses that offer better employment.

#### 13. Businesses, Services, & Quality of Life

- a. Technical assistance, incubation, promotion, and financial support for both new and existing businesses
- b. Remove barriers to entrepreneurship
- c. More access to financing and real estate.
- d. Eliminate deserts where there is lack of access to food and other services
- e. Help more dollars to stay in the community instead of being extracted or having those dollars go elsewhere.
- f. We need fight displacement and discrimination to keep our neighbors here.
- g. We need an organized way to keep the community clean and livable.
- h. We need better control over land and real estate so that buildings and land can be put to appropriate use rather than being warehoused or put to a use that negatively affects the community.

#### **Signed Onto Organizationally: In Alphabetical Order**

Alliance of the Southeast (ASE), Amalia NietoGomez, Executive Director  
Bridges/Puentes, Samuel Corona, Founding Member  
Central South Shore Area Council, Linda Young, President

Coalition For a Southworks CBA  
Jeffrey Manor Community Revitalization Council, Marie Collins-Wright, Vice President  
People's Council of Southeast Chicago, Linda Gonzalez, Lead Facilitator  
South Chicago Neighbors, Emily Licona, Member

**Signed On Individually, Organization Listed for Identification Purposes Only**

Yessenia Baltazar, Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF)  
LaDonna Calhoun  
Hazel Colar  
Delia Cruz, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
Ivan Cruz, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
Onaje Douglas, Metropolitan Family Services  
Shawn Gill  
Mia H  
Rachel Hardy, Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF)  
Maria Hernandez  
Kim Lewis  
Renee Nowlin, Secretary, KECS Block Club Association  
Joann Podkul, SE Chicago Historical Society  
Michelle Royster, Director, Youth Advocacy Foundation  
Enrique Sanchez, Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF)

## Chicago Plan Commission: We Will Chicago - Comment

Guillermo Cruz <guillermo.cruz@aon.com>

Wed 2/15/2023 10:42 AM

To: CPC <CPC@cityofchicago.org>

Cc: Guillermo Cruz Jr. (gcruz00@gmail.com) <gcruz00@gmail.com>

[Warning: External email]

Dear Members of the Chicago Plan Commission,

First of all, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and experience of the We Will Chicago citywide plan. My name is Guillermo Cruz, born and raised in Chicago, and a current Marshall Square resident. I was honored to have personally been part of the We Will Chicago initiative since August 2021, as a volunteer. I was humbled to be Co-Chair for the Lifelong Learning pillar throughout the Research Phase and participated in the Public Engagement Process phase, where I had the opportunity to engage with hundreds of Chicagoans to share with them the plan and seek their input.

Through this process, I had firsthand experience in learning lots about the themes and issues of our beautiful city; while ultimately, contributing to the policy framework creation that is being presented to you, the Chicago Plan Commission for approval and adoption and all Chicagoans. What I appreciate about the plan, is the historical acknowledgement of inequities and the vision to address and prevent those inequities from occurring in the future. The plan establishes a foundation to promote and encourage neighborhood growth and vibrancy while addressing social and economic inequities. The plan provides ambitious, but realist short and long term goals that will elevate our city for a better tomorrow. These goals will create a sense of belonging and access for betterment to every Chicago resident regardless of racial and ethnic identity, gender identity, immigratory status, and disability status. The plan is not going to solve all of our systemic issues, but it will definitely serve as a strategy and guide to set goals and objectives for City priorities to create and establish equity and resilience, especially in the most needed communities.

Thank you for all you do for our city and I appreciate you listening to me.

We Will Chicago!

Best,

Guillermo Cruz

e: gcruz00@gmail.com



February 15, 2023

Ms. Laura Flores, Chair  
Chicago Plan Commission  
121 N. LaSalle Street  
Chicago, IL 60602

Re: NBW letter regarding proposed resolution to adopt We Will Chicago Framework

Dear Chair Flores:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding the proposed resolution to adopt the We Will Chicago Framework Plan. Our support for passing this resolution is contingent upon small, industrial, and manufacturing businesses being involved in the implementation of We Will Chicago and included on the Implementation Steering Committee

North Branch Works (NBW) is a membership-supported nonprofit neighborhood organization that for forty-one years has promoted balanced, job-creating economic development along the North Branch of the Chicago River. We are also a City of Chicago “delegate agency” for the Local Industrial Retention Initiative (LIRI) Program and a Neighborhood Business Development Center (NBDC), providing an array of support services to local businesses.

NBW has been involved in the We Will Chicago planning process including the facilitation a virtual “meeting-in-a-box” to gather input for this citywide plan from small, industrial, and manufacturing businesses in our service area as well as important neighborhood stakeholders. Also, our staff did an extensive review of the plan and met individually with DPD staff to strengthen Pillar 3: Economic Development.

We would like to see the plan recognize small, industrial, and manufacturing businesses as valuable stakeholders whose engagement is essential for growing Chicago’s economy and fostering equitable development across the city. Manufacturing firms represent 11% of Chicago’s GDP. Recent scholarship shows there are over 50,000 unfilled manufacturing jobs in the region, which pay an average of \$85,000 including benefits. A commitment to filling open manufacturing and industrial jobs would have a \$4.25 billion impact on Chicago’s economy. Every job in manufacturing induces six additional jobs.

However, these businesses are unlikely to make extensive capital investments (both human capital and equipment) if they are under threat of adjacent rezonings. We believe the industrial and manufacturing sector merits a more balanced evaluation in the We Will Chicago Framework Plan.

We appreciate the Chicago Department of Planning and Development including our idea to work with business leaders and neighborhood stakeholders to develop tools that balance the city’s need for economic growth and high-quality jobs and manage environmental inequities and climate change in the Implementation Starter Guide. From our perspective, we see too frequently the opportunity to attract high-quality industrial jobs pitted against environmental concerns. At the same time, industry, such as advanced manufacturing, is becoming greener, making these issues more complicated than they are often portrayed.


We would have liked to see the inclusion of other input from the business community including:

- Addition of a sentence that acknowledges the important role played by small and industrial businesses in fostering economic growth. Here is our suggestion: “The WWC plan recognizes that small and industrial businesses promote economic resiliency, advance sustainable economic development, and support equitable neighborhoods.”
- Under Goal 2: Support business growth through Chicago, especially businesses owned by Black and Latino people, we recommend adding the following two objectives:
  - Include business leaders in developing strategies to support job growth.
  - Identify barriers to business growth and develop tools to reduce them.
- Under Goal 3: Invest in equitable and inclusive workforce development to build resilient economic clusters, we recommend adding these two objectives:
  - Invest in on-the-job training and other workforce development programs (transitional jobs, social enterprise) to stimulate equitable job growth.
  - Coordinate workforce development programs with employers to connect training with available job opportunities.
- Under the Economic Development Pillar Goal 2 in WWC Goals, Objectives & Policy Ideas, we suggest adding “Implementing a new industrial policy that recognizes the importance of this sector in Chicago’s history and its future in a sustainable manner.” This is outside the scope of the WWC Plan, but it is an important part of the policy ideas.

Provided the business community including leaders from the manufacturing and industrial sectors is included on the Implementation Steering Committee, we affirm our support for the We Will Chicago Framework Plan.

Thank you for the continued opportunity to provide feedback, and please reach out with any questions.

Best regards,

  
Jonathan Snyder  
Executive Director

P: 773-929-5552 x2223

E: [jonathan@northbranchworks.org](mailto:jonathan@northbranchworks.org)



February 16, 2023

## **We Will Chicago Framework Plan**

### **Public Comment**

**Prepared by: Grow Greater Englewood (GGE) [www.growgreater.org](http://www.growgreater.org)**

Good morning, Chairwoman Laura Flores, Vice Chair Andre Brumfield, Elected officials, City Commissioners and fellow members of the Chicago Plan Commission.

Grow Greater Englewood (GGE) a food sovereign organization working to improve the quality of life in the Greater Englewood district, is writing to support today's action to advance the We Will Chicago Framework Plan to the full City Council. We see significant value in this plan and hope that 40 goals and the 150 objectives outlined in the plan would make Chicago a better place.

GGE is most pleased that the city desires to use this platform to strengthen its community engagement. The public needs to know how best to approach the government and what platform to utilize to advance public opinion. The We Will Chicago plan serves as a very helpful guide for exchanging information and ideas with municipal units.

GGE hopes to use the Eight Planning Pillars to better direct city agencies to the programs, which we believe will help protect, preserve and build the community economy. For 2023, planning pillars associated with Environmental Protection, Transportation and Infrastructure, Community Engagement, Climate and Energy, Arts and Culture will be our highest priority.

We are committed to the community and hold a collective interest with local stakeholders to ensure an improved quality of life for all.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this very important public engagement plan.



February 10, 2023  
Chicago Plan Commission  
City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle St.  
Chicago, IL 60602

Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC) submits this written testimony in support of the resolution for We Will Chicago and urges Commissioners to adopt the framework plan.

We Will Chicago is the first citywide plan the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) has undertaken since the 1960s. When the last citywide plan was created, many communities were excluded from fully participating in civic life and planning. MPC believes that the We Will Chicago planning process has included some of the most robust and creative engagement strategies that DPD has employed. The impact of that public participation is apparent in the fact that the framework plan before us today positions Equity and Resiliency as its two core principles, has a pillar dedicated to Civic and Community Engagement. It also includes an acknowledgement of the role city planning has played in past and ongoing harms.

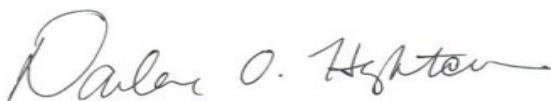
For too long, Chicago has lacked a unifying vision for what we want this city to be, and the values we want to drive public decisions. We Will Chicago captures this vision through its guiding principles, themes, goals, and objectives. This plan will serve as a critical guiding document for Chicago moving forward, and through implementation can shape future decisions related to programming, policy, investments, budgets, land use, infrastructure, and capital planning.

MPC has been a partner, advisor, and participant in We Will Chicago on various aspects of the planning process. We co-developed the pre-planning workshops that helped shape the themes and structure of the planning process, participated on the Advisory and Public Health and Safety Research Teams, created a meeting in a box toolkit to strengthen public engagement, and facilitated working groups to provide recommendations on historical reckoning and implementation. Through our participation and support, we have seen first-hand the effort and intention put into the planning process by staff within DPD, the Mayor's Office, and other city agencies.

The City has committed to several actions to advance We Will Chicago. The Mayor's Office plans to create an implementation steering committee and require city departments to create action plans to implement objectives from the plan. Departments will also be expected to show how We Will Chicago fits in with their newly required Racial Equity Action Plans and their annual budgets. DPD will align future neighborhood planning with We Will Chicago, beginning with the upcoming Central Area Plan. These implementation steps are consistent with the plan's principles, and it is encouraging to see these public commitments.

Chicago Plan Commission approval will signal to Chicago residents that their public servants value their vision for the City. It will also empower departments and staff to implement the plan and integrate its guiding principles of Equity and Resiliency into their own projects and decisions. MPC urges the commissioners to vote in support of the We Will Chicago Framework Plan.

Sincerely,



Darlene Oliver Hightower  
President and CEO  
Metropolitan Planning Council

## Board of Governors

*Chair*

Paul C. Carlisle •

*Vice Chair Development*

Kyle Barnett •

*Vice Chair Development*

Ellen Carnahan •

*Vice Chair Development*

Janet Chess •

*Treasurer*

Ramiro J. Atristain-Carrion •

*General Counsel*

David Williams •

*Immediate Past Chair*

Melissa Washington •

Erica Marquez Avitia

Carol Ross Barney

Meena Beyers •

Ciere Boatright

Matthew Brewer •

Todd C. Brown

Christopher B. Burke

Eileen Chin

Lester Crown

Zena Diggs

Polly Eldringhoff

Nedra Sims Fears

Manuel Flores •

Alejandra Garza

Janet R. González Tudor

Linda Goodman

Laritz Lopez

Bernard Loyd

Mary K. Ludgin

James E. Mann

Lee M. Mitchell

David Mook

Daryl Newell

Jim O'Leary

Sameer Patel

Frank D. Pellicori

Julian G. Posada •

Elle Ramel

George A. Ranney, Jr.

Matthew R. Reilein •

Robert G. Reiter, Jr.

Alana Ward Robinson

Unmi Song

Bruce W. Taylor

Michael A. Thomas

Jessica Droste Yagan •

## Executive Advisors

Carol L. Bernick

*Polished Nickel Capital Management LLC*

John Bucksbaum

*Bucksbaum Retail Properties, LLC*

Jonathan C. Bunge

*Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP*

David Casper

*BMO Financial Group*

Robert M. Chapman  
*CenterPoint Properties*

Keating Crown  
*Sterling Bay*

Marsha Cruzan  
*U.S. Bank*

J. Michael Drew  
*Structured Development, LLC*

Robert Frentzel  
*CIBC U.S.*

John S. Gates, Jr.  
*TradeLane Properties, LLC*

Nancy S. Gerrie

Ari F. Glass  
*Mansueto Office Inc.*

Steven N. Miller  
*Origin Ventures*

Charles J. Moore  
*The Banc Funds*

J. Marshall Peck  
*InterPark Holdings LLC*

Joan Rockey  
*The Mather Group*

Mark G. Sander  
*Old National Bancorp*

Katherine M. Scherer  
*Deloitte LLP*

Scott Swanson  
*PNC Illinois*

Stephan B. Tanda  
*AptarGroup, Inc.*

Edward J. Wehmer  
*Wintrust Financial Corp.*

Theodore Weldon  
*Lendlease*

## President & CEO

Darlene Oliver Hightower •

*Executive Committee* •