



## Memo to the Mayor



**SHOWED UP: 12,000**  
attended an *On the Table*  
as a guest or host

**SPOKE UP: 1,473**  
told us their concerns, ideas  
and solutions

**STEPPED UP: 625**  
hosted and wrote memos,  
via paper and digital formats

**STOOD UP: 376**  
took the challenge of writing  
a fully responsive memo

### MOST COMMON TOPICS:



**LIVABILITY**  
20%



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**  
18%



**EDUCATION**  
13%

**"Livability"** = the extent to which current residents can afford to live here, with equitable access to public services and amenities, with opportunities to know and live with others peacefully, and with the expectation of fair treatment and protections.

**Date:** December 2019

**To:** Mayor Lori Lightfoot and  
Members of the City Council of Chicago

**From:** The Chicago Community Trust on behalf of  
*On the Table* 2019 Participants

**CC:** City of Chicago Council Government and  
Chicago area residents

**Subject:** A call to action: Keep Chicago affordable, livable and  
responsive to residents

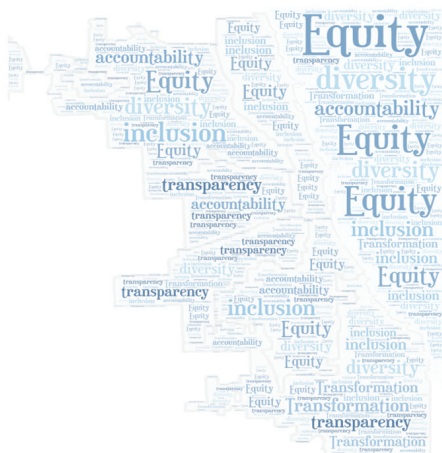
On May 14, you were among the approximately 12,000 people who participated in *On the Table*, a day of civic conversation that annually brings together a cross-section of Chicago to show up, speak up and stand up for our city and region. This year, we encouraged participants to turn their conversation into a Memo to the Mayor to provide ideas and recommendations on issues facing our city. The response from residents was strong: more than 1,400 *On the Table* participants stepped up to write memos, post feedback and offer ideas. In this compilation memo, we summarize the submissions that provided solutions to address a full spectrum of issues identified by residents. The solutions focused on increasing equitable outcomes for Chicago residents, primarily by focusing on livability, economic development, and education.

### Affordable Housing

*On the Table* participants expressed the most concern about the need for affordable housing solutions. Residents expressed their desire to be engaged in the conversation on how to fix the issue as the lack of affordable housing impacts their ability to continue to call Chicago home. Ideas were shared to address the need for affordable housing as it relates to: seniors on fixed incomes; residents who cannot afford property tax or rent hikes; families who are being priced out of home ownership; neighborhoods losing 2-4 flat rental housing units; and, people who are currently homeless. For example, Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E) shared the need to promote and support age-inclusive housing developments that allow older adults to live with other generations in order to address the social isolation and mobility issues that can occur when elderly citizens live in senior housing. In addition, a concerned urban planner advocated for the legalization of Accessory Dwelling Units as a way of developing more affordable housings in residential areas.

### Inclusion

A running thread throughout the memos we received was people calling for the inclusion of their lived experiences in decision-making processes. For many, the first step towards addressing inclusion is to encourage a climate that values their experiences – starting with City Hall's 5th floor and fanning out to aldermanic offices. Teens want to be seen as



**EQUITY**  
was the leading  
**MAYORAL VALUE**  
most aligned to  
memo writers'  
opinions, followed by  
**TRANSFORMATION,**  
**INCLUSION** and  
**ACCOUNTABILITY.**

the city's assets, not liabilities. One youth advocate explained, "Why is it illegal to be a teenager in Chicago? Our young population wants opportunities to learn how to lead rather than be impacted by adult-based solutions that do not consider accessibility, technology and social-emotional development." Another resident described how older adults want to be valued and heard, and would like increased connections to their broader community. People with disabilities want to be included at every decision-making table, from conversations about the greening of Chicago and employment opportunities to discussions about mental health and public housing. Amplifying the call for inclusion, a young Black man recommends developing a city budget with community members that reflects investment in people to solve the root causes of violence.

### Accountability and Transparency

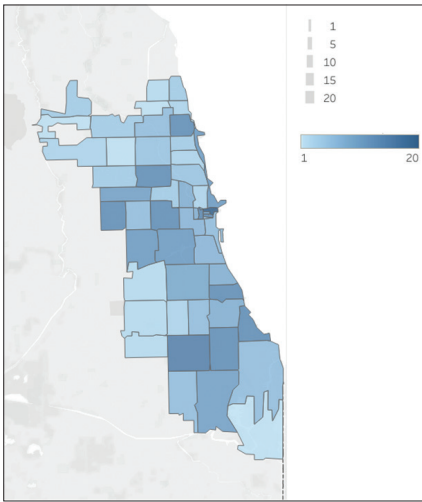
Another common thread expressed by residents was a desire to be in partnership with city leadership to collectively develop solutions for the benefit of all.

For instance, concerned Chicago residents suggest more accountability and transparency about the activities of World Business Chicago and the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, which they want to drive more job creation by locating mid-sized enterprises on the South and West Side. World Business Chicago itself wrote that a top priority for your administration needs to be addressing inequity issues on the South and West Side through neighborhood economic and workforce development. They also emphasized the need for developing a comprehensive strategy for grant allocation (and support to businesses on the use of such funds), attention to equitable transit-oriented development and leveraging Opportunity Zones.

Students and foundation representatives recommended the creation of a municipal dashboard on racial equity in city policies and practices to let residents know information, such as: the amount paid by the city for lawsuits settled by and against the Chicago Police Department; data on hiring and representation in the cabinet by marginalized people; and the city's spend on contracts with Minority, Women-Owned, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. Operation Warm and their Chicago-area network called for the review of city grant distribution and development of strategies to ensure neighborhoods benefit in alignment with their respective needs and that resources are not over-saturated in some neighborhoods.

### Restored Communities

There was no shortage of ideas from *On the Table* participants about the use (or re-use) of space in Chicago as a means of addressing the inequitable distribution of resources, or of providing opportunities for residents to engage and bask in our city's great diversity. There is a sense that by creating "communal safe spaces" and accompanying support systems, trauma can be healed and violence reduced. With



**Memos came from all over Chicago.**  
**25%—South Side**  
**19%—West Side**  
**13%—Central Chicago**  
**11%—North Side**

(32% of submissions did not indicate a location.)

school closings still fresh in the memories of many Chicagoans, there were many ideas for repurposing these and other spaces in ways that can strengthen the community. A resident encouraged the re-purposing of abandoned buildings in each of the 77 community areas as places where community residents can come together to talk, create artwork and heal old wounds, as a model for how arts and culture can impact place. Older Chicagoans from Ravenswood expressed a desire to see libraries leveraged as unique community gathering spaces for different generations. A librarian wrote in support of extended library hours and restored Sunday hours to give youth a place to be.

## Closing

Mayor Lightfoot, the ask from Chicagoans is to be seen and acknowledged – this is why Chicagoans have embraced *On the Table*. Every year, thousands of people come together to experience and understand one another as neighbors. Our communities desire to be more connected, more supported and more united. When residents are energized and engaged, they begin to imagine and put forth solutions for a better Chicago.

As the region's community foundation, The Chicago Community Trust recognizes and understands the pressing issues impacting our communities, as identified in this memo. We heard *On the Table* participants express the need to increase equitable outcomes to keep Chicago affordable, livable and responsive to its residents. As we embark on an exciting new strategic direction at the Trust that builds on our legacy, we look forward to partnering with you to strengthen our region. Through our efforts, we will marshal community investments, elevate community voices, advance policies, and inspire philanthropic support for initiatives that demonstrably contribute to closing the racial and ethnic wealth gap and lead to a thriving, equitable and connected Chicago region.

Like many Chicagoans who participated in this year's conversations, the Trust envisions a reality of affordable housing and home ownership; good jobs that allow families to save for the future; programs that increase financial stability; investment in communities that have been stripped of opportunities; the highest-quality education for all students, regardless of their ZIP codes; and the decriminalization of entire communities of our friends and neighbors.

In closing, people are excited and hopeful for the future. They want you to succeed and they want to be part of the solution. We compiled, from the contributions of hundreds of voices, a set of recommendations for your administration to consider implementing, which can be found in the enclosed addendum.



**Ten neighborhoods and The Loop had the highest concentration of memo submissions.**

**Albany Park**

**Austin**

**Englewood**

**Hyde Park**

**Lower West Side**

**Near North Side**

**Near West Side**

**North Lawndale**

**South Lawndale**

**South Shore**

**The Loop**

<sup>1</sup> The Marshall Square Resource Network, via Memo 00Q0h00001huFY

<sup>2</sup> #ChiTeensMatter, via Memo 00Q0h00001hu8Os

<sup>3</sup> Members & Neighbors of Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, via Memo 00Q0h00001htt2w

<sup>4</sup> The Marshall Square Resource Network, via Memo 00Q0h00001huFY; and The Night Ministry's staff and interns, via Memo 00Q0h00001httbw

<sup>5</sup> A Safe Haven and the real-estate development community, via Memo 00Q0h00001huEEq

<sup>6</sup> Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (H.O.M.E.), via Memo 00Q0h00001htggf

## Addendum:

### Recommendation from *On the Table* 2019 Participants

The following recommendations have been pulled from the hundreds of ideas submitted by *On the Table* participants, which were written by social service agencies, youth advocates, community organizers, older adults, homeowners, renters and concerned Chicago residents:

#### 1. Multi-Sector Partnerships

- Increase city funding (to) foster public-private partnerships to enable community networks like Marshall Square Resource Network to build capacity from within communities.<sup>1</sup>
- Pilot free CTA transportation for youth who enroll in city-sponsored programs in Summer 2020, such as One Summer Chicago and After School Matters<sup>2</sup>; measure the impact on applications, participation and completion.
- Partner with leading nonprofit developers, such as Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, LUCHA and The Resurrection Project, to create a city-wide, social marketing campaign that promotes how affordable housing benefits all residents.<sup>3</sup>
- Prioritize improving the quality of life and employment rate of people with disabilities; encourage cooperation between the Chicago Police Department and PACE paratransit drivers in service to this population.

#### 2. Health Equity

- Invest in affordable, accessible and culturally appropriate mental health services within communities; develop mobile mental health services to support residents who are homeless and/or living on streets; meet them at community-based sites that serve them in other ways (e.g., food pantries) and have established trusting relationships with them. The mobile services can include psychiatric care and specialized care to meet the needs of the LGBTQ community, while separate shower/laundry vehicles can help street-based Chicagoans maintain their hygiene. Build off the work of the Chicago Youth Storage Initiative, and work happening in other cities, to create a public storage solution for people who are homeless.<sup>4</sup>

#### 3. Housing Equity

- Explore the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO) as a tactic in your five-year housing strategy, including an expansion of the radius of the affordable housing requirement to three miles for off-site affordability projects, regardless of the ward.<sup>5</sup>
- Ask the City Council to prioritize revisiting the ordinance banning Accessory Dwelling Units as a method of increasing affordable housing in the city as part of the five-year housing plan.
- Encourage the city's Commissioner of Housing to explore intergenerational housing development by visiting two sites developed on the North Side by H.O.M.E.<sup>6</sup>

#### **4. Increase Transparency in City Government**

- a. Toward advancing transparency, and supporting locally owned businesses, ask city departments to report on their advertising spending with the more than 200 community and ethnic news outlets.
- b. Ask the Chief Equity Officer to create and maintain a city dashboard on racial equity practices.

#### **5. Inclusive Economic Growth**

- a. Raise awareness of the City Colleges of Chicago's College-to-Careers program and challenge the corporate community to create more workforce pipelines and job training programs.<sup>7</sup>
- b. Create a coalition of programs and people serving 17-24 year-olds and develop a communications campaign to reach high-school students with information about the options available to them via the City Colleges of Chicago, workforce development programs and apprenticeships across the county.
- c. Create a line in the City's budget to fund the incubation of worker cooperatives to provide technical assistance, training and research, with a focus on those minority-owned cooperatives located in communities that are predominantly Black and Latinx.<sup>8</sup>

#### **6. Support Arts and Education**

- a. Create a service-learning program for middle-school aged students to encourage learning about different people, culture and customs, reducing biases.<sup>9</sup>
- b. Using the city's mural project as inspiration, pilot a program where artists can apply to take over abandoned buildings in their neighborhoods, converting it into studio spaces for community exhibitions and public sessions.<sup>10</sup>
- c. Curate a selection of books, available within the Chicago Public Library system, to help Chicagoans (high-school students, in particular) understand the meaning of and need for mayoral values; one memo writer suggests including *The Color of Law: The Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> World Business Chicago, via Memo 00Q0h00001hu7NE

<sup>8</sup> Members of Street Vendors Association of Chicago and Chicago Community and Workers' Rights, via Memo 00Q0h00001htrYE

<sup>9</sup> Chicago Ideas Brain Trust, via Memo 00Q0h00001htt0q

<sup>10</sup> Hana L. Anderson, via Memo 00Q0h00001htqAn

<sup>11</sup> 80-year-old White Woman Yearning for Fairness for African Americans, via Memo 00Q0h00001htt44

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