In recent years, the City of Chicago has been accumulating and posting local demographic data that is now free and available to the public (https://data.cityofchicago.org/). The Array of Things (AoT), a collaboration between the University of Chicago, Argonne Laboratory and the City of Chicago, is one project that exemplifies the City's interest in producing high quality open data. With over 500 sensors set to be installed across Chicago, AoT will collect environmental data (air quality, temperature, humidity, rainfall, pedestrian/vehicular traffic counts, etc.) in real time, acting as a “fitness tracker” for the city. This map shows the locations of the first 44 live (blue) and planned (orange) sensors (https://arrayofthings.github.io/index.html).

The Center for Realtor Technology CRT), a division of the National Association of Realtors, has been working alongside AoT to help improve our understanding of the City's environmental health , exploring various possibilities for outdoor sensor implementation. One proposal has identified community gardens as uniquely well qualified sites for environmental data collection. With hundreds of community gardens across the city, CRT sees the potential of these sites to provide fine-grained data on Chicago’s many urban microclimates. This map depicts the community gardens of two gardening organizations, Peterson Garden Project (dark green) and NeighborSpace (light green).

Access to food has been a longstanding issue in Chicago with urban food deserts still being commonplace in the city, particularly on the South and West Sides (dark orange). The City of Chicago defines food deserts as areas located more than a mile from a retail food establishment (yellow) licensee with a business location larger than 10,000 square feet. The City aims to eliminate all Chicago food deserts by 2020.

Sources: Chicago Data Portal (Chicago Community Areas shapefile, NeighborSpace shapefile, grocery stores 2013 table, city-owned land shapefile), Peterson Garden Project (http://petersongarden.org/garden-with-us/).

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