

NEW ★ IDEAS

MAYORAL FELLOWS

CLASS OF 2024

NEW IDEAS

121 N LaSalle St, Chicago, IL, 60602

cityofchicago.org/fellowship

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CHICAGO

A large, bold, blue text element spelling out "CHICAGO". The letters are thick and blocky, with the "C" and "H" being particularly prominent.

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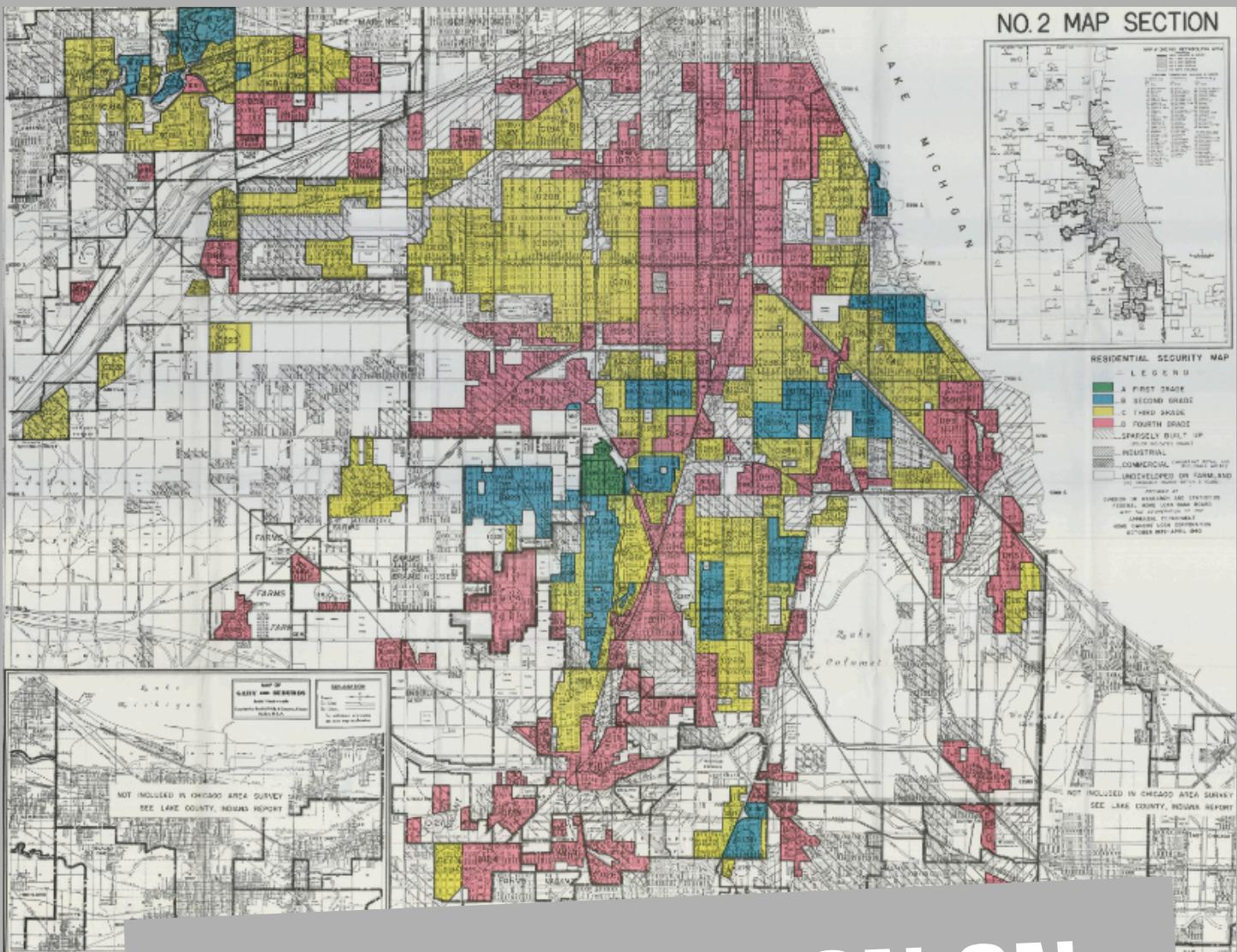
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CIVIC EDUCATION ON 20th-CENTURY SEGREGATION

Monique Graham and Austin Busch

With: OERJ, DCASE, CPL, CPS, MO-Communications

A program to ground conversations about reparations and racial disparities in Chicago with a common understanding of the last century's policies of segregation.

WHY IT MATTERS

Mayor Johnson's Executive Order No. 2024-1, the Black Reparations Agenda, details numerous historic policies employed by multiple levels of government in the Jim Crow era that "legalized and perpetuated racial segregation and discrimination". The inequitable use of eminent domain for urban renewal projects, as well as the racial covenants and lending practices that led to segregation in public housing, redlined neighborhoods, and white flight to suburbs, are direct results of institutional policies. Chicagoans are not frequently reminded of this history which continues to be reflected in public health and economic disparities between neighborhoods. Anecdotal experiences from citizens have also highlighted limited knowledge of redlining and its long-standing consequences among its beneficiaries and students at different levels of education. Therefore, a common public understanding of these historic and systemic segregation policies, led by community expertise at all education stages, will help guide constructive civic dialogue about overcoming geographic disparities, and will elevate conversations around the need and purpose of reparations.

HOW IT WORKS

This program will help residents of all ages understand how past policies and governmental decisions have impacted the development patterns of the city, and make a case for prioritizing equity when considering public programs to mitigate past harms.

Direct civic education will target different educational levels, from children in school to adults visiting the library. Educational resources will be developed in collaboration with community members and organizations, leading to an adoptable curriculum program or supplement for local educational systems to incorporate as part of their regular civics curriculum, in partial fulfillment of Section 27-20.4 of the Illinois School Code. This coordinated approach should bring together existing non-profit and philanthropic educational work with museum curators, academic researchers, and local community organizations to direct learners towards local resources.

To advance the conversation in the realm of public information and news media, a simultaneous communications strategy for city departments and officials should be developed. With a coordinated communications effort, the city can ensure topics like urban renewal, redlining, and housing covenants are in the public vernacular.

NEXT STEPS

- OERJ should bring together community-based conversation leaders to collaborate with teachers to develop an adoptable curriculum for students at Chicago Public Schools (as well as private or suburban schools) about the lasting local impact of discriminatory policies. This will consist of educational materials, reading lists, and recommended guest speakers and field trips.
- CPL should develop branch exhibits featuring material collections, and books such as Richard Rothstein's The Color of Law, Mehrsa Baradaran's The Color of Money, Ben Austin's High-risers, and Linda Gartz's Redlined. This can be expanded in a programming series and social media activation highlighting the CPL's Chicago Department of Urban Renewal Records digital archive.
- DCASE should consciously promote and provide support for work that contextualizes the effects of segregation policies, such as Redefining Redlining, the Maxwell Street Market, and the National Public Housing Museum. DCASE should also renew efforts towards the Chicago Monuments Project, to continue reconsidering historical narratives long held in physical form, and create new or recontextualized artistic dedications.
- OERJ can coordinate the development of a public official communication guide for use by the Mayor's Office speechwriters, press contacts, and city and departmental communications staff. Prepare and regularly update talking points, factoids, and historical events that can be quickly incorporated into relevant speeches, panel discussions, and press releases.

A common public understanding of historic and systemic segregation policies will help guide constructive civic dialogue



TRAFFIC-LIGHT EVENTS

Austin Busch

With: OEMC, BACP, CDOT, CTA

A suite of policies to encourage car-free travel to major events.

WHY IT MATTERS

Major events are predictable causes of traffic congestion, as large numbers of people travel to and from a specific geographic area. Though major events already undergo traffic planning and coordination, this planning typically has not prioritized space-efficient transportation options such as transit or biking. Instead, attendees increase local congestion by opting for ride hail services, and neighboring areas are leveled for surface parking lots. This impedes the quality of life for residents near major event spaces, reduces the safety of pedestrians, and worsens the experience of event attendees. By giving pedestrians, bikers, and bus riders prioritization, event attendees will be encouraged to choose options that relieve local congestion, reduce transportation costs, and encourage local business development.

HOW IT WORKS

Local street closures will be formalized with deployable barriers to all safe pedestrian and cyclist routes onto neighborhood grids. Consolidated bus boarding areas with dedicated priority lanes and off-board payment queues will speed up transit through event areas, and increase transit capacity in the venue's vicinity. Likewise, ride hail services will be compelled to use geofencing to organize a designated waiting lot and utilize queue-based operations, as practiced at O'Hare airport.

Where possible, nearby parking lots will be considered for redevelopment into mixed-use districts, with development fees directed towards parking consolidation in park-and-ride lots with shuttle service or CTA rail access. TIF districts may be enacted to enable transit signal priority and bus queue infrastructure. Event surcharges will go towards covering an amortized event transportation fee, which will provide free transit and bike share access to and from events, modeled by similar programs in San Francisco and Seattle.

NEXT STEPS

- Organize a standing working group on major events led by OEMC, involving Choose Chicago, CDOT, BACP, CTA representatives, and Divvy representatives.
- Develop actionable plans for event transportation management at major venues: Wrigley Field, Guaranteed Rate Field, Soldier Field, the United Center, and Grant Park.
- Apply lessons learned from major sporting venues to large concert halls and special events, including major parades, street festivals, music festivals, and road races.
- Review alternatives for clear bag policies, including bike and pedestrian valets to store personal effects or bike helmets outside of the venue itself.
- Designate special event zones and adopt ordinances requiring Transit Network Providers to follow operating protocols that geofence event geographies.
- Partner with CTA and RTA to develop an integrated transit pass with major event tickets, and work with City Council to require adopting the pass as an event permit precondition for large ticketed events.





BUSINESS IMPACT MITIGATION LOANS

Austin Busch

With: BACP, DPD, DOF, DOL

Support local businesses through periods of lost revenue
due to city construction projects.

WHY IT MATTERS

Major construction projects including large private developments, public road repaving, and transit system improvements have a propensity to disrupt longtime local businesses that rely on foot traffic to maintain a stable cash flow. While the end result of this construction may improve sales at nearby businesses, the interim construction period must be weathered, and vulnerable businesses may not survive. Project planning that leads to partial closures instead of complete access control leads to longer project timelines, effectively driving up construction project costs. Providing flexibility to construction planning by offering affected businesses favorable loans can lead to faster, cheaper construction of city infrastructure upgrades while promoting community stability.

HOW IT WORKS

In a program informed by [examples in Seattle, Cleveland, and the Twin Cities](#), businesses that will have access impeded by a city-funded construction project can apply for mitigation loans that will cover the period of constrained access during construction projects. Loan amounts will be determined by reported taxable revenue, using a three-year pre-project baseline average to calculate lost revenue during the project period.

For areas covered by a Tax Increment Financing district, loans of up to three years may be allowed as a financing cost for project construction. Areas under the Neighborhood Opportunity Fund would be offered similar terms, expanding access to South and West side corridors. Businesses that are eligible for the Build Community Wealth Bonus would be prioritized, with more favorable interest rates and loan forgiveness. The city would act as a guarantor for businesses that cannot otherwise receive traditional bank loans, with a regular review process to ensure the program is achieving community stability goals at an acceptable cost.

BACP will coordinate the outreach effort, acting as a trusted resource to direct impacted businesses toward beneficial programs. In doing so, points of contact will be developed, enabling direct communication about updated project impacts.

NEXT STEPS

- Create an implementation plan with DPD to coordinate loan terms, acceptable credit risk, and application process, and develop the required financing structures with DOF.
- Direct DOL to review existing fund constraints for TIF and NOF agreements. DOL should also create a standard agreement that can be quickly adapted to each project and business.
- Empower BACP to coordinate with CDOT, CTA, CHA, and other departments developing major infrastructure projects to distribute program application information during project outreach.
- Write a [Business Impact Mitigation Checklist](#), and integrate it into current procedures.







MEET THE FELLOWS



Austin Busch



Origin: Johnston, Iowa

University: University of Illinois Chicago

Degree: Master of Urban Planning & Policy

Interests: Active Transportation, Land Use, Housing, Government Efficiency

Departments

Worked With: CDOT, DTI, CPL, MO-Policy

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/austin-busch-in-transit](https://www.linkedin.com/in/austin-busch-in-transit)

Austin is a burgeoning planner and optimistic urbanist, with an interest in active transportation and bus planning, as well as supportive land uses. He received a degree in music composition from Northwestern University in Evanston, before working his way into city government and advocacy. As a fellow, he has worked on transportation policy around bus improvements, researched best practices for library co-facility development, provided subject matter expertise for infrastructure grant proposals, and proposed improved cross-department collaboration strategies. In his free time, he enjoys riding his bike to far-flung destinations, typically ones near a bakery.

Origin: Cincinnati, Ohio

University: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Degree: Master of Public Affairs

Interests: Economic Development, Climate Resilience, Transportation, Housing

Departments

Worked With: DOE, CDPH, CPL, IGA

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/caroline-corona-522946129](https://www.linkedin.com/in/caroline-corona-522946129)

Caroline is pursuing an MPA from the La Follette School of Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and holds her bachelor's degrees in public affairs and city planning from the Ohio State University. Prior to graduate school, Caroline worked at the Greater Washington Partnership: a civic alliance dedicated to advancing an inclusive and competitive economy from Baltimore to Richmond. Caroline is particularly interested in promoting equitable economic opportunity and climate justice, and loves all things local government.

Caroline Corona



Monique Graham



Origin: Kingston, Jamaica

University: University of Chicago,
Harris School of Public Policy

Degree: Master of Public Policy

Interests: Economic Development and Policy
focused on People with Disabilities

Departments Worked With: MOPD, BACP, DFSS, Digital Equity

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/monique-a-graham

Monique has worked as an economist and researcher for five years split between not-for-profit organizations and multilateral development banks. As a Mayoral Fellow, she had the opportunity of working on a diverse set of projects, working with the Mayor's Office of People with Disabilities and the Digital Equity team to broaden digital access for individuals with disabilities and has researched scope for collaborating with ISPs to improve accessibility policy. Monique has also created a comparative analysis of business licensing processes in other major cities to identify opportunities for improving the licensing framework in Chicago. Her contributions extend to strengthening the workforce development agenda, a top priority of Mayor Brandon Johnson.

Origin: Lincoln, Nebraska

University: University of Chicago,
Harris School of Public Policy

Degree: Master of Public Policy

Interests: Social safety net programs, Cities, Just Transition

Departments Worked With: DSS, CDPH, DOE, DFSS

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/eric-holmberg-chi

Eric Holmberg



Eric was an organizer for unions and campaigns before returning to UChicago for his public policy degree. In graduate school, he is focused on municipal government, health policy, and data analysis. As a fellow, Eric worked with Streets and Sanitation developing standard operating procedures, the newly revived Department of Environment on its FY25 strategic planning, the Department of Public Health creating a Medicaid safety net assessment, and Senior Services tracking programmatic goals. He can't help calling 311 while walking and biking around Chicago in his free time.



Mayor's Office Fellowship Program