



COOK COUNTY COMMISSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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ALMA E. ANAYA
CHAIR
COOK COUNTY COMMISSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION

March 18, 2021

Dear Honorable President Toni Preckwinkle and Cook County Board of Commissioners:

The Covid-19 pandemic has had jarring effects on urban areas across the country, and some of the most palpable outcomes of this have been seen in the areas of economic development, unemployment, and public transit. This has a tremendous effect on the social and economic life of the region, especially in a such a vital regional hub as Cook County.

In 2016, the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation was established to develop policy recommendations focused on strengthening the capacity of the inner city and Southland of Cook County. The pandemic has taught us that an entity such as the Commission on Social Innovation, a body that works to promote economic and workforce development in Cook County, is needed in finding solutions to how we move forward as a society. While the Commission faced disruptions in operations during the first half of 2020, the latter half of the year was dedicated to identifying priority areas to support Cook County in incorporating long-term sustainability in services and programs. These priorities include re-imagining our approach in public transit to ensure it is equitable for all residents, addressing the racial wealth gap to support County residents and small business owners, and supporting access to government services in a way that is streamlined and accessible.

Moving ahead, the Commission looks forward to strengthening relationships with both Cook County agencies and external partners to achieve its goals. It seeks to be a thought partner in pandemic relief and beyond to support the communities most in need of government services. Through these efforts, the Commission aims to develop, support, and advance policy efforts at Cook County and other levels of government with shared priorities.

Please find below the 2020 Annual Report of the Social Innovation Commission that highlights the work and priorities of the Commission. Feel free to contact my office if you have any questions or wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alma E. Anaya".

Alma E. Anaya
Chair, Cook County Commission on Social Innovation
Cook County Commissioner, 7th District

2020 MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION

ALMA E. ANAYA

7TH DISTRICT COOK COUNTY COMMISSIONER, CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION
ON SOCIAL INNOVATION

MARC J. LANE

ATTORNEY AT LAW, VICE CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION ON SOCIAL INNOVATION

HARRY ALSTON

VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT, SAFER FOUNDATION

RODGER COOLEY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHICAGO FOOD POLICY ACTION COUNCIL

XOCHITL ESPINOSA

FOUNDER, THE CO-OP ED CENTER

XOCHITL FLORES

CHIEF, COOK COUNTY BUREAU OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ANA GUAJARDO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTRO DE TRABAJADORES UNIDOS

MARIA HADDEN

49TH WARD ALDERWOMAN, CITY OF CHICAGO

CHRISTYN FREEMON

FOUNDER & CHIEF SOLUTIONIST, PROJECT FORWARD

MARC LOVELESS (2016-2020)

FOUNDIG EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COALITION FOR JUSTICE AND RESPECT

HOWARD MALES

PRESIDENT, RESEARCH PROS

MORGAN MALONE

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, FARPOINT DEVELOPMENT

KARIN NORINGTON-REAVES

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CHICAGO COOK WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

WENDY RAYMER

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS, BMO HARRIS

HAROLD RICE

PRESIDENT AND CEO, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
OF COOK COUNTY (CEDA)

CARRIE THOMAS

FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHICAGO JOBS COUNCIL

JOHN YONAN

BUREAU CHIEF, COOK COUNTY BUREAU OF ASSET MANAGEMENT

GERI AGLIPAY

NATIONAL MANAGER AT SMALL BUSINESS MAJORITY

SOL ANDERSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, I GROW CHICAGO

PATRICK BRUTUS

CITY OF CHICAGO COORDINATOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – BUREAU
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SPECIAL SERVICE AREA DIVISION

KRISTI DE LAURENTIIS

SOUTH SUBURBAN MAYORS AND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BACKGROUND

In April 2016, the Cook County Board of Commissioners enacted Ordinance #19-1382, establishing the Cook County Commission on Social Innovation to address issues of unemployment, economic distress and disparities in the inner city and Southland of Cook County.



The Ordinance, entitled “The Cook County Commission on Social Innovation for Job Creation, Workforce Development, Entrepreneurship, Community Revitalization, and Industrial Development” aimed to address inequities in the South and South Suburbs.

Our purpose and mission as a Commission is to make actionable policy recommendations to help achieve the following purposes:

- (1) To the strengthen the capacity of the inner city and the Southland and, generally, of the County to work cooperatively with relevant stakeholders to create, scale, and sustain innovative social programs;**
- (2) To build the capacity of nonprofit organizations and government to pursue entrepreneurial ventures in the inner city and the Southland and in the County; and**
- (3) To attract investment and philanthropic funding to the inner city and the Southland and to the County to support these ventures.**

Furthermore, the Commission serves as a resource for the County’s agencies and departments in a common cause to promote the Southland’s and the County’s data-driven social innovation ecosystem in collaboration with other relevant actors. The Commission is a laboratory that convenes a broad and diverse array of interests and expertise within and across sectors to facilitate cooperation and the co-creation of innovative solutions to social problems.

This annual report captures that work that was accomplished in the 2020 calendar year and highlights the goals set forth by the Committees. Additionally, it fulfills the obligation of the Commission under the Ordinance that this body “shall submit reports to the County Board at least annually. Such reports shall address the plans, actions, and resources needed to achieve the commission’s purposes.” The 2020 Annual Report establishes a framework for the Commission’s priorities for moving forward in a society that seeks to recover and adapt to a “new normal.”

THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL CAPITAL



COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

Wendy Raymer

Christyn Freemon

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The Committee on Financial Capital was established to find ways to be a partner with the Bureau of Economic Development as a platform for efforts that aim to maximize opportunities for enhancing economic empowerment throughout Cook County.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The Financial Capital Committee has explored how Cook County resources can be consolidated to be as accessible as possible to service users. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the County developing various unprecedented initiatives and services to benefit impacted communities.

The Financial Capital Committee has started assessing how these efforts can become sustainable to provide a continuum of services to the community, even after the pandemic. Such work will include providing input on making applications for assistance more accessible and streamlined.

Another priority area for the committee is researching opportunities for Cook County to foster community-led innovation for economic progress such as enhancing technical assistance for entrepreneurs and strengthening resources related to worker cooperatives.

Looking forward, the Committee will continue to explore any potential support and input they can provide on policy suggestions that affect the Cook County budget.

THE COMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL CAPITAL

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Morgan Malone

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The Committee on Intellectual Capital was established to make government data more accessible and useful for public life. The Committee explores ways to measure the impact of the Commission and design comparative standards between it and other County entities.



STRATEGIC GOALS

The Intellectual Capital Committee was not operational in 2020 due to constraints brought from the pandemic and limited time capacity from Committee members. The Commission Chair is committed to relaunch the Intellectual Committee in 2021 and support its essential role within the Commission. Initial next steps will be to reengage committee members to and identify new members. Once the Committee becomes active, the Committee will identify priority areas, will revisit the previous projects that were not completed, and will work on a concrete strategic plan for the Committee.

The Commission looks forward for the Intellectual Committee to reactivate to support the overall efforts of the Commission in 2021.

THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC CAPITAL



COMMITTEE CHAIR

John Yonan

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The Committee on Public Capital works to promote social innovation by finding solutions through the County's zoning and transportation levers.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The Public Capital Committee's efforts have been focused on identifying ways of doing transit in the region in a more effective manner. The COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions have led to major transit demand decline for many public transit systems including in Cook County. The Committee has explored support for local transit while moving along efforts that have been

identified by the Committee.

One priority area is the Lincoln Highway Industrial Corridor where there is the need to leverage state support to advance the promotion of the corridor. This project will help further industrial development in municipalities such as Chicago Heights, Ford Heights and Sauk Village. This Corridor is one of the focus areas that is part of an overall initiative in South Suburban Cook County to identify economic development opportunities.

Another opportunity identified by the Committee is the implementation of a shared fare card mandate in the region with the three modes of transit. This includes working with the different transportation systems— Metra, Pace, and Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)— to make it a priority across the service boards. These efforts can potentially include a public awareness campaign. The Committee understands there is work ahead as it was highlighted in the Chicago's Equitable Transit Oriented Development report. Looking at all the modes of transportation and identified potential future corridors, the Committee recognizes that public transportation plays a major role for access to and from the City of Chicago, and for servicing residents that are not able to work from home.

THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL

COMMITTEE CHAIR

Rodger Cooley

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The Social and Human Capital Committee works to build sustainable centers of economic development, employment and engagement that provide socio-economic advancement to the most disinvested residents and communities in Cook County.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Among the Committee's priorities are addressing the racial wealth gap through community wealth building. The Committee will consider several approaches to this, by first building an understanding of County resources already directed toward this priority, partnering with them to enhance service delivery, and developing potential policies directed to expand the County's impact.



(Continued on Page 7)

Committee on Social & Human Capital – Strategic Goals

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Areas under the Committee on Social & Human Capital for collaboration include, but are not limited to,:

- (1) The County's Procurement processes and opportunities for expanding the diversity of contractors and vendors in the procurement pipeline and who are awarded contracts;
- (2) Strategizing on how to improve the workforce ecosystem to grow quality jobs; and
- (3) Increasing opportunities for shared ownership models with equity as a central value.

With the COVID-19 pandemic having long lasting impacts on the local economy and community well-being, the Committee is interested in how these efforts can be part of a larger, sustainable social safety net. The Committee has identified an opportunity to incorporate public health and environmental values along with workforce and economic priorities. This involves ensuring safety measures in workplaces and creating opportunities for people to gain the skills needed in an evolving workforce towards a greener and more technologically advanced economy. The Committee wants to support Cook County in taking deeper and more proactive approaches on these fronts.

DIRECTION FOR THE COMMISSION

The Commission on Social Innovation remains committed to meet the needs of the area's vulnerable population by identifying novel solutions to social problems in a more effective, efficient, and sustainable manner. The Commission's approach will play a crucial role on identifying, developing, and applying invigorating solutions to address the involving challenges augmented by the pandemic. The priorities identified by the committees will help guide the work and direction of the Commission in 2021.

The Commission will also engage with other County entities to support priorities already addressed by the County and to understand the available resources and operations at a deeper level. For example, digital equity has been identified by the County and Commission as a priority area. This is an opportunity for the Commission to work with other county entities to figure out the complex issues and address it in a

substantive manner.

Furthermore, the Commission plans to increase collaboration efforts with other partners in the public, private, and philanthropy sector to support innovative investments that provide new opportunities for County communities. Cook County has seen the positive impact on this approach with the two most recent collaborative efforts with the private sector on the Lincoln Highway Industrial Corridor and South Suburban Economic Growth Initiative (SSEGI). Broader set of partnerships and collaboration will help guide and develop comprehensive approaches to address important opportunities in the County.

Finally, the Commission will focus on developing, supporting, and advancing public policy efforts at the County and other levels of government that align with the Commission's work. The four committees will play a key role in driving these efforts forward and identifying important policies the Commission should support. Chair Anaya and Committee Chairs will work closely to ensure Committees receive the support needed to move forward with the projects and goals identified.

The Commission looks forward to advancing its important work while collaborating with the County and external stakeholders across the board. Despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, the Commission is confident it will make significant progress in achieving its goals in 2021.

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