

A More Equitable River

CCAC Charrette 2018

Thesis

“Our Chicago River will be Chicago’s great recreational park. If the lake is our front yard, then the river is our residential backyard.”

-Mayor Rahm Emanuel

The Chicago River, long neglected by many Chicagoans and regarded only as an industrial waterway, is seeing a resurgent boom in environmental quality, recreational amenity, and real estate development over the past two decades. Since 2010, there are four new boathouses, the world-class river walk extension, and over 150 acres of private riverfront redevelopment including Riverline, the 78, Lincoln Yards, and the River District. With both public and private investment pouring into redevelopment along the banks of the Chicago River, our city is returning to the river as an asset for real estate redevelopment, recreational amenity, job creator, and transit-connector.

However, redevelopment along the river is not benefiting all city residents, especially along South Branch neighborhoods such as Lawndale, Little Village, Pilsen, Bridgeport, and China Town. Neighborhoods face issue such as a lack of recreational access, environmental justice, racial segregation, and economic inequity.

Other factors on future river planning include the goal of a continuous trail along the entire river, revisions to some of the City of Chicago’s Planned Manufacturing Districts (including several along the river), and an increase in funding for neighborhood-based small businesses through the Chicago Community Catalyst Fund or Small Business Opportunity Fund.

As Mary Sue Barrett, president of the Metropolitan Planning Council, stated in her annual address: “If we challenge inequality, we will grow.”

What

In the fall of 2018, the CCAC Young Leaders group will set out to provide pro-bono planning and design effort to assist a selected community partner or partners in creating a vision for redevelopment of multiple sites along the Chicago River with equity, resiliency, and connectivity as fundamental goals. Job creation, real estate investment, transit connectivity, land use and open space planning, housing, and environmental improvement will all be focus areas of the charrette.

Participants will be get the opportunity to network with one another, utilize their professional expertise, and create a meaningful planning and design solution to address the city’s most pressing problems.

Who:

- CCAC Young Leaders
- Regional Partners (could include the Metropolitan Planning Council, Chicago Community Trust, Active Transportation Alliance, Friends of the Chicago River, Center for Neighborhood Technology, and many others)

- Neighborhood Partners (could include community-based non-profits, Community Development Corporations)
- CCAC Staff
- CCAC Board Members (as special guests)

When:

- Thursday, September 20, 5-8pm
- Friday, September 28, 9am – 5pm
- Friday, October 5, 9am – 7pm (includes evening reception/final presentation)

Where:

- Perkins+Will, The Wrigley Building, 410 N. Michigan, Suite 1600