

The logo for the Metropolitan Planning Council, featuring a stylized orange arch above the text.

Metropolitan **Planning** Council

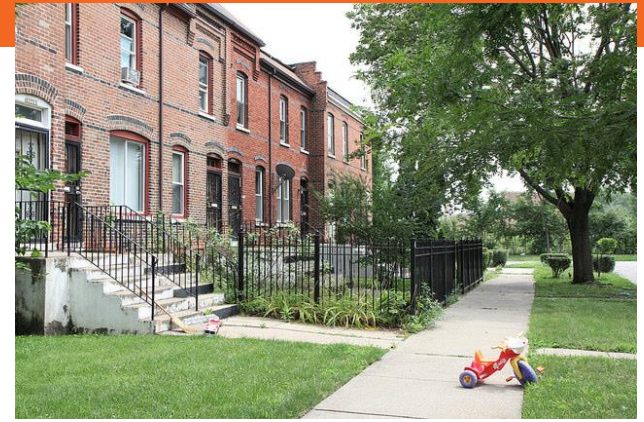
Gentrification and Public Health

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“We Can’t Gentrify Our Way to Health Equity”

Gentrification & MPC's Work

- Improvements to housing, transportation, land use, natural assets can lead to displacement
- Working toward solutions so that communities don't have to choose between infrastructure and assets they deserve and displacement



HOW GENTRIFICATION AFFECTS HEALTH

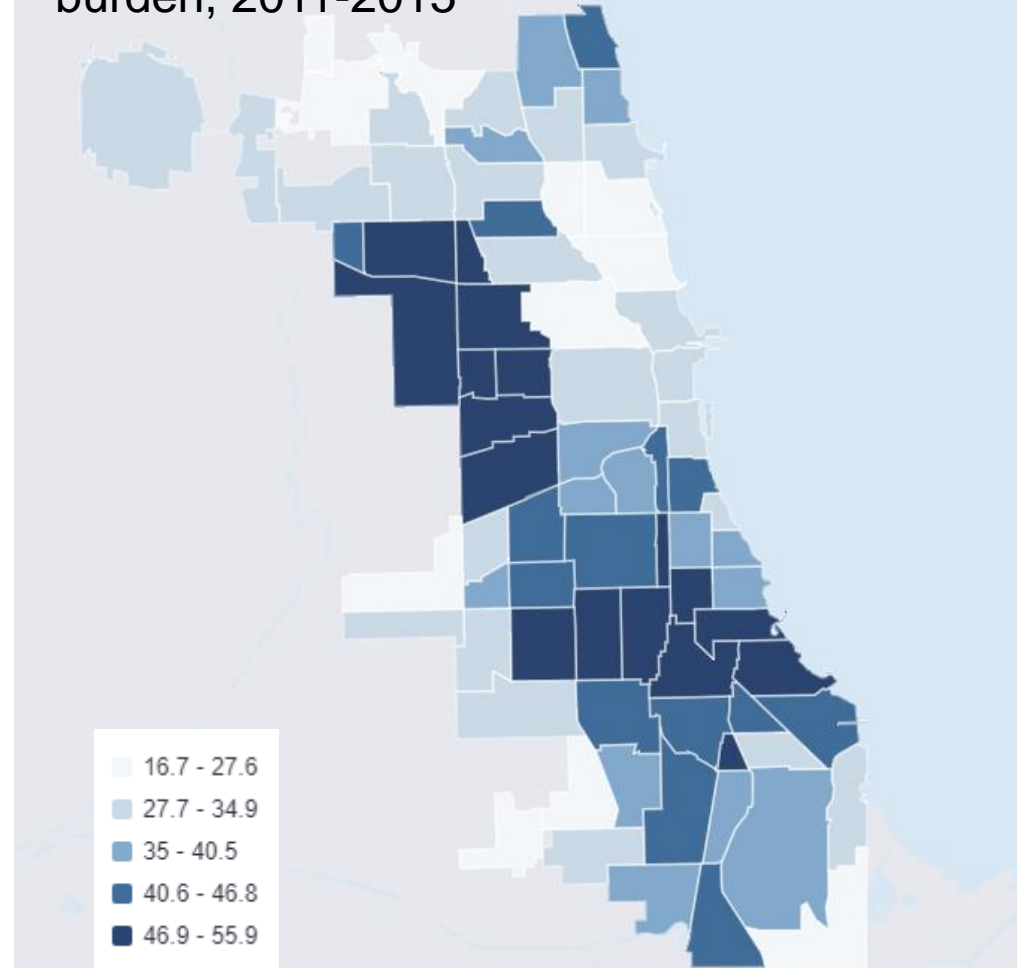
Gentrification

- Reinvestment into a devalued neighborhood to create a new residential and commercial infrastructure for middle- and high-income residents¹
 - Displacement: included in our working definition
 - With or without racial shift
 - Economic, cultural, social pressures
- Displacement can happen without gentrification

Why is this a public health issue?

- 33.7% of Chicagoans are housing-cost burdened²
- Increasing suburban poverty¹, needs regional approach
- Not only individual choices, population patterns
- Underlying structures

% of households facing severe housing cost burden, 2011-2015



Factors related to gentrification

- Income/wealth, history of disinvestment, status of current assets^{1,3}
- Race/Ethnicity
 - In Chicago, “classic” gentrification is more likely to affect majority Latinx neighborhoods, while majority Black neighborhoods face persistent disinvestment without gentrification^{4,5}
- Renters¹
- Already experiencing discriminating along these demographic lines, already facing health inequities

Physical & Financial health effects:

- Further difficulty finding affordable, healthy housing³
- Homelessness³
- Inequity in transit, job, and commute options³
 - Longer commutes associated with increased stress, sleep loss, higher consumption of fast food⁶
- Environmental exposures³
- Less access to services and institutions⁷
 - Healthcare
 - Education
 - Cultural

Social & Emotional health effects:

- Stress³
- Violence & injury³
- Policing, enforcement, trivial arrests and citations⁸
- Mental health³
- Social & cultural loss^{7,9}



We Lose Space, Installation by Megan Wilson and Gordon Winiemko, San Francisco Art Commission Grove Street Gallery (across from SF City Hall), San Francisco, CA, 2000, photo by Megan Wilson:

http://www.stretcher.org/features/the_gentrification_of_our_livelihoods/

Complexities

- Nobody wants their neighborhood to be disinvested
- Pros of neighborhood change without displacement
 - Economic makeup of a neighborhood can change without displacement¹⁰
 - Example: filling vacancies
 - Investment can bring needed resources and improve quality of life
 - Mitigate known harms of racial & economic segregation⁴
 - Create sustained mixed-income neighborhoods with genuine inclusion, without them being a “stopping point” on the way to displacement

Complexities

- Cons of neighborhood change without displacement
 - Social loss^{7,9}
 - Cultural & institutional loss^{7,9}
 - Loss of economically and relevant services, resources^{7,9}
 - Political shifts
- We have to do something, so how do we do better?

MEASURING PROGRESS ON HEALTH INEQUITIES

Measuring Health Progress – Key Questions

When measuring changes in health outcomes at the community area level, important to understand:

- Who is leaving, who is staying? Why?
- Where do people move when they are displaced due to economic reasons?
- What are the net health effects of staying in a changing/gentrifying neighborhood?
- To whom do the benefits of mixed-income neighborhoods accrue?

Opportunities for Measuring Progress

- IPUMS databases – track where people are moving
- Matching public health practice & research with emerging housing and economic research
 - Epidemiologists, we need your help!

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Community Engagement & Knowledge Building

- (Genuine) Community involvement
- Assessment Tools:
 - Gentrification Index (Voorhees UIC)¹¹
 - Displacement Project & early warning tool (UC Berkeley)¹²
 - Community Impact Assessment Tool (MPC)



<https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/research/corporate-citizenship-news-and-topics/corporate-community-involvement.html>

Equitable Investment

- Helping local businesses and homeowners prepare for change
 - Understanding triggers and planning in advance of major investments
 - Investing in capacity, adaptability
- Neighborhood Opportunity Fund
- Continue building affordable housing, inclusionary zoning
 - Affordable Requirements Ordinance
- Role of anchor institutions (e.g. hospitals)
 - Building affordable housing, investing in neighborhood infrastructure

Housing Cost Policy Options

Policy options being explored in other cities:

- Rent control
- Property tax freeze
- Progressive income taxes
- Regional approach



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Thank You!

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