

Youth Voice: Ushering in a New Era for Chicago

How Can the City of Chicago Better Utilize the Expertise and Leadership of Young People?

**Mikva Challenge City Youth Commission
August 2011**

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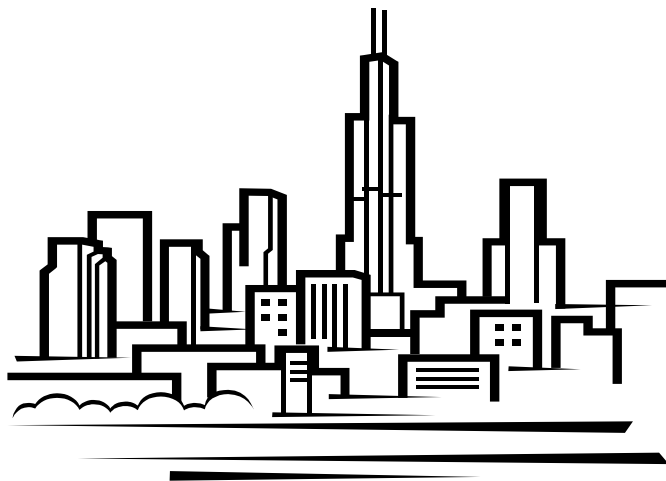


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Who we are:

It is simple to say who you are, where you're from, and your background history. However, this isn't the case for us. We are the Mikva Challenge City Youth Commission, a group of twenty youth leaders from different high schools and colleges/universities throughout the city. As the newest council of the Mikva family, this summer we were committed to answering our research-framing question, "How can the city of Chicago better utilize the expertise and leadership of young people?" Our passion and commitment to our goal led us to come together despite our diverse backgrounds. Within a mere seven weeks we completed over 120 hours of research and became an inseparable family, and we are now ready to create a new chapter of Chicago youth involvement not only in our individual communities but in our entire city.

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Our project:

We dedicated all of our work this summer to one framing question: *“How can the city of Chicago better utilize the expertise and leadership of young people?”*

Our main goal was to find ways in which youth voice can be heard and utilized throughout the city to its fullest potential. In order to do that, we used a variety of research methods, from creating a survey to distribute to city employees to meeting with youth leaders in Milwaukee and Washington D.C. to holding panel discussions and interviewing important city workers. Our extensive research gave us invaluable information that helped us achieve our goal and make recommendations that will improve the City of Chicago as a whole, as well as the Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Transit Authority.

Research Methods:

Total Hours of Research: 20 students spent 7 weeks doing over 120 hours of research

Survey:

- Surveyed 237 city employees about youth voice in their departments and their perceptions of young people

Interviews:

- 11 interviews of youth regarding their CTA experience
- 6 interviews of Chicago Police Officers
- Interviews of 6 experts in the fields of youth governance and police

Focus Groups:

- Site visit to Southwest Youth Collaborative
- Site visit to the City of Milwaukee Youth Council
- Met with students from Ballou High School in Washington D.C.

Secondary Research:

- Analyzed articles about youth voice in other cities (including San Francisco, Boston, and Philadelphia)
- Analyzed articles about other city transit systems (including Washington, D.C. and Boston)
- Analyzed articles about police departments in Chicago and other cities (including Newark, where Superintendent McCarthy is from)

Executive Summary

City government affects everyone in Chicago. Unfortunately, there is a huge disconnect between youth and adults/decision makers when it comes to city government decisions that affect the youth. The City Youth Commission seeks to bridge that gap. After spending the summer doing intensive research, we came up with recommendations for the city on how it can better utilize youth voice in city decision-making. Our report is broken into two sections. First, we examine how youth can play a role in city governance in general. Second, we examine key issues within two city departments that youth expertise can help inform. The report presents a total of twelve recommendations that we believe can help improve the city not only for young people, but for all Chicagoans.

Youth Governance

Youth Governance is about authentic youth civic engagement, where youth are active in city government, and where youth voice is heard and accounted for. Youth voice is important because it offers: 1) Creativity, 2) Diverse experiences and 3) Positive change.

These themes led us to the following recommendations

- Create an institutionalized Mayoral Youth Council
- Hold citywide youth meetings where youth voice can be heard

These two recommendations are interconnected: the citywide youth meetings would be a way for the youth council to get input from a broader base of youth in Chicago.

City Departments

This report then examines two departments that are most relevant to the lives of young people: the Chicago Police Department (CPD) and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). This section is a “case study” to show how youth ideas could be utilized by city government.

The CPD has a duty to the citizens of Chicago to protect and serve. But, over the past few years the relationship between the CPD and the youth has gotten worse, because of incidents such as negative interactions between police and community members, and reports of police brutality. Recommendations for this department have been broken down into three areas of focus: 1) Community interaction, 2) Youth interaction and 3) Training and protocol.

These areas of focus include the following recommendations:

- Police-community meeting in each district to improve police and community relations

- Transparent citizen complaint system
- Required community service for officers in communities they patrol
- Police programs in schools
- Mandatory for all officers to carry a Taser and be trained on proper protocol
- Mandatory Crisis Intervention Training for all officers

A majority of youth get around the city by taking CTA. Although there is a lot of youth-adult interaction on CTA, most of those interactions are not positive. Both youth and adults fail to see each other's point of view. Our recommendations are based in three areas of focus: 1) Operations, 2) Customer service and 3) Safety.

These areas of focus led to the following recommendations:

- Trash cans on every train and trains should be cleaned at the end of every route
- Implement a Chi-Card (a multi-use school, library and transit card) for students
- Customer service training for all CTA workers
- A police department for every train line (red line, blue line, green line...etc)

Conclusion

Government has never been a welcoming place for young people, but we believe that can be changed. Throughout the summer, we identified many reasons why youth and adults do not often partner, stemming from such things as: adults thinking they know what is best for young people, youth being afraid to voice their opinions, and the lack of systems and opportunities for the two groups to come together.

We hope that this report helps to break down stereotypes about young people. We want it to serve as a first step in ushering Chicago into a new era where people look to Chicago to see how to get youth ideas at the table.

Youth Governance

Youth are experts on their communities and know in detail what goes on in today's society. However, a large problem within government is that youth tend to be over looked in the decision making process. This leaves youth dissatisfied with decisions made by city government, which results in a strained relationship between the two and creates a lack of trust and communication. Consequently, politicians and youth have a negative perception of one another. The reluctance to work together on both sides makes it difficult for real progress and reform to be made among the youth of this city, who are born and raised here, and the politicians who make the decisions that affect the lives of youth.

A future in which city government and youth work together not only benefits the two groups but the entire City of Chicago as well. This leads into our recommendations, which not only see young people from all over the city mobilizing themselves but also forging a positive, cooperative relationship with the Mayor and the city government. Their innovative, "youthful" ideas will prove that young people have the vision and the maturity to cooperate with those who work toward the same goal: to create a better, more effective Chicago for its citizens.

Top Reasons why Youth Voice is Important:

Reason 1: Creativity

Reason 2: Diverse experiences

Reason 3: Change

Summary of Recommendations for Youth Governance:

Recommendation 1:

The city of Chicago should have an institutionalized youth council. This council would have two levels. The first level would be primarily responsible for meeting with the Mayor and other stakeholders. The second level would be primarily responsible for collecting data, information, and opinions from community youth groups and organizations and presenting it to the first council.

Recommendation 2:

The city of Chicago should have meetings for youth from each ward to discuss issues in their community, with incentives for those who attend the meetings. The youth at these meetings would report back to the institutionalized council.

Youth Governance: Why Youth Voice is Important

REASON 1 – Creativity: Young people are able to identify problems within the community as well as being able to provide creative solutions to solve the issue.

EVIDENCE:

- In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there is an established Milwaukee Youth Council (MYC) that was first proposed by Alderman Joe Davis in 2004 after having several interactions with young people in the city. “I quickly realized that Young Milwaukeeans have innovative ideas about improving conditions for themselves and their peers, and their opinions have substance and merit,” (*Milwaukee Youth Council History*). The proposal of a city youth council was passed through Common Council in 2004 and on May 9th, 2005, the first fifteen members from different districts of the city came together as the first Milwaukee Youth Council (*Milwaukee Youth Council History*).
- The Milwaukee Youth Council recently took on the issue of alcoholic beverages being marketed to young people. “Pabst Blast” was being marketed as an “energy drink” and was sold in “brightly colored 23.5 ounce cans” in stores, possibly to persuade younger customers to buy the product (*City of Milwaukee News Release*). The MYC decided to tackle this issue head on with MYC President Zachary Komes stating at an August 2011 press conference, “We’ve worked to take a legislative stand against the marketing of alcoholic malt beverages to young people, we’ve urged changes to the state budget, we’ve reviewed proposals for youth development funds and we’re setting the example” (*City of Milwaukee News Release*).
- The San Francisco Youth Council (SFYC), which was established in 1995 after members of the community lobbied City Hall to create a Youth Council, created an ordinance in September of 2010 that would set more nutritional standards for restaurant foods that include toys with their meals. Their overall purpose of doing so was to “support families seeking healthy eating choices for their children by permitting restaurants to offer toys and other incentive items only in conjunction with foods meeting specified nutritional criteria” (*San Francisco Youth Council 2010-11 Legislative Tracking*).

REASON 2 – Diverse experience: Youth have unique experiences that differ from adults.

EVIDENCE:

- In early July we visited SWYC (Southwest Youth Collaborative), which is an organization that has campaigned to reform or close the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (also known as the Audy Home). The members of SWYC vary in age and ethnicity, but they all come together to protest and change the way youth are treated in the juvenile system. There are several youth organizations in the city just like SWYC, who believe that the city needs to change the way it views youth. They pride themselves on youth voice and youth led reform. There are tens of thousands of youth in the city who come from all parts who want to see youth voice take a more active role in city politics.

- Youth have unique experiences that adults don't have, yet adults are the ones making the decisions that affect youth. Youth have insight on what works and what doesn't. Youth should be able to voice their opinions on things that directly affect their lives.
- Youth are affected by many decisions that adults make in their working environment. A majority of adults are aware of this but don't take it into consideration. Adults make many decisions and don't think how the decisions they make may result in affecting youth in some kind of way. Instead of involving or giving them a seat at the decision making table. The Youth Commission survey indicates that 80 percent respondents said yes that youth are affected by decisions made in their working environment.

REASON 3 – Positive change: Youth voice can change the perspective that adults have imprinted in their minds about young people.

EVIDENCE:

- Many adults think that youth are bad, and that they are affiliated with or always have to be doing something bad. We believe this because **45.1% of our adult respondents to the Youth Commission survey say that many youth in the city are gang-affiliated.** We believe that if youth and adults meet on city issues regularly, adults will get to see a different side to young people. Youth will have the chance to interact with adults on a different level, versus adults just seeing youth in the neighborhood or on the news doing negative things.

Youth Governance Recommendations: Systems for Youth Input

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The City of Chicago should have an institutionalized youth council. This council would have two levels. The first level would be primarily responsible for meeting with the Mayor and other stakeholders. The second level would be primarily responsible for collecting data, information, and opinions from community youth groups and organizations and presenting it to the first council.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Youth will be able to give their input and feel good about themselves because they know that their concerns won't be ignored by adults. Imagine how much school attendance would improve because the students know that they have a change coming that they created for themselves. It would be amazing.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Chicago is a city that makes multiple decisions that impact youth; however, youth voice is rarely heard when the decisions that affect youth are made. City departments lack youth leadership and expertise. We surveyed many Chicago city workers and found that 80% of city workers surveyed said that their jobs directly affect youth, yet youth don't have a say in what actually happens to them. Therefore, this council will be perfect to provide badly-needed youth voice in city departments. This new council will represent youth voice and be able to give the youth perspective on important issues.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

We met with the Milwaukee youth council and watched them in action in City Hall. They are a council that is made up of 13 youth who come from different wards in Milwaukee. They revise laws that deal with youth and analyze those laws before they are passed. We saw the positive results of an institutionalized voice after they passed a law to limit the sales of an alcoholic beverage that encouraged underage drinking. This would be the model that the Chicago City Youth Council would be following. More examples of institutionalized councils include the councils in San Francisco, Boston, and Cambridge, all of which play roles of youth voice in the city **and** government (*National League of Cities, Authentic Youth Civic Engagement: A Guide for Municipal Leaders*).

Ideas for Implementation:

Chicago's Mayor will work with a panel of youth that is as diverse as the city of Chicago, and get its input on issues that involve and impact youth. This panel of youth will be advised by the second level of the council to gather data and ideas to show the Mayor as they meet with him, ensuring that their ideas are well-researched and supported by a majority of Chicago's young people.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The City of Chicago should have meetings for youth in each ward to discuss issues in their community. The youth who attend these meetings will report back to the City Youth Commission with their research and recommendations on issues dealing with youth. There will be incentives for youth who attend the meetings and work productively.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Youth in all 50 Wards are heard by their elected officials.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

The City of Chicago rarely gives youth the opportunity to give input on issues pertaining to youth. Many youth think their voice is not heard so they don't feel like there is a need to get involved. Also, many of them are scared of rejection so they won't give their opinions on the issues that matter to them. The meetings will allow them to actually speak their mind and give solutions to the problems that impact them. Many elected officials and civic leaders find that when they offer meaningful opportunities for youth to be engaged in their communities, more young people participate and encourage their peers to do the same to create something that is positive and sets examples for the next civic leaders.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

In our survey, 80% of the city workers surveyed said youth are affected by the decisions made in their working environment, but only 50% said their department actively involves youth in decision-making. Youth deserve the right to have a say in any decisions that will affect them. Having meetings in each ward will give youth from around the city a chance to share their experience and ideas that can be used to better the community.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Meetings would be attended by the ward alderman.
- Youth would get paid and/or receive service learning hours for coming to the meetings daily and presenting their ideas professionally.
- Community organizations would help facilitate meetings.

INTRODUCTION TO CITY DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Mikva Challenge City Youth Commission selected two city departments, the CTA and CPD, to highlight how youth voice could inform issues the city faces. We see this section as a “case study” on how youth ideas could transform the city. We were only able to focus on each department for a week, thus, these recommendations just scratch the surface of what youth could create when given the opportunity to do research and come to the table with their ideas.

Why CPD and CTA:

The Youth Commission evaluated many city departments to choose the two they would focus on for this summer. The Chicago Police Department and the Chicago Transit Authority were chosen because they both are extremely relevant to the lives of young people and could benefit from youth expertise. The reason why our commission decided to work on the CTA is because we know transportation is part of a youth’s daily life and we wanted to improve their service by sharing recommendations. The reason why we decided to work on the CPD is because youth and police interact regularly, and many stakeholders on both sides feel that the interactions should be improved.

CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT

The three main issues we realized the Chicago Police Department desperately needed to fix were community interaction, training and protocol, and youth interaction. Youth have expertise on Chicago Police and these three issues because each and every young person has had a unique experience with a Chicago Police officer. Our recommendations vary from improving customer service and mandatory classes/youth training, to school programs with youth and Chicago police officers/employees.

Summary of Recommendations for the Chicago Police Department:

Youth Interaction Recommendations

Recommendation 3: The local police district should be required to have meetings with the youth in the community. At these meetings, police and youth can work together to fix everyday problems youth face and to improve police strategies for dealing with youth.

Recommendation 4: There should be programs in every elementary school (beginning at 3rd grade) that are co-facilitated by police officers and high school youth to improve police and youth relationships. The extended school day could be used to host these programs.

Training/Protocol Recommendations

Recommendation 5: New and current Chicago Police Officers should be required to take mandatory C.I.T (Crisis Intervention Training) training. This training includes a curriculum that instructs police officers on how to better deal with issues pertaining to youth.

Recommendation 6: Every officer should carry a Taser along with a handgun. Prior to being issued the Taser, s/he should take a mandatory class that properly shows how to use a Taser correctly. Disciplinary consequences should be issued to officers who use a handgun in a situation where a Taser would have been more appropriate.

Community Interaction Recommendations

Recommendation 7: Chicago Police officers should be required to complete 20 hours of community service every quarter in the community they patrol.

Recommendation 8: Community members should be able to file a complaint in various forms *in addition to* the existing online format (in writing, verbally, in person or by mail, telephone, Telephone Device for Deaf (TDD), facsimile, or electronic mail). Then there should be a public website where all complaints filed against police would be transparent and later addressed in CAPS meetings in each district.

Chicago Police Department Recommendations

These recommendations are just examples of the kind of ideas youth could develop if the Youth Commission is put into place. If the Youth Commission was charged with coming up with recommendations to improve the police department, we would begin by doing the following research:

- Survey youth about their relationships with police
- Interview or survey more police officers at every level of the police department
- Interview Superintendent McCarthy to find out what issues are most important to him and to learn from his expertise
- Attend CAPS meetings in all of our communities to see what was similar and different
- Meet with other community organizations who work on police issues or violence in the community
- Look at other cities to see what they have done to improve youth/police relationships

Chicago Police Department Recommendations: Youth Interaction

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The local police district should be required to have meetings with the youth in the community. At these meetings, police and youth can work together to fix everyday problems youth face and to improve police strategies for dealing with youth.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Crime would decrease because police would be actively seeking the expertise of young people.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

As of now no district in the city of Chicago has youth-only meetings where youth can come in and talk to officers and other youth on the issues that affect their community every day. When developing strategies on how to deal with youth, the police department develops the strategies without any input from young people. The overall vision is to improve the relationship between CPD and youth by giving them opportunities to learn from one another.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

“Young people, at the end of the day, are the ones that really know what’s going on. They just have to be part of the process...sometimes adults don’t have all the answers.”

- *Michael Shields, former director of Safety and Security at CPS*

“Sometimes it’s not what information you can give the youth, it’s what information they can give you.”

- *Cease Fire Representative*

During our research, we conducted interviews with three officers from the fourth and sixth districts, and asked the following question: “Off the top of your head, can you name any programs for youth in your district that could better the relationship between youth and police officers?” Sadly enough all three officers replied “no.” The next question was, “Are there any department-wide programs that could do the same?” Once again the officers responded “no.”

Another thing we noticed was when three members of our group attended a CAPS meeting, we were surprised to see that the majority of attendees were senior citizens. It turned out to be more of a ‘senior party’ rather than a CAPS meeting. There was little effort to reach out to young people.

Ideas for Implementation:

- The meetings would have to be approved by the current Superintendent, Gary McCarthy.
- The local district would be responsible for advertising the CAPS meeting through social media, CTA signs and local newspapers and informing the community/youth who enter the station.
- The CAPS meetings and youth-only meetings would not be the same.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

There should be programs at every elementary school (beginning at third grade) that are co-facilitated by police officers and high school youth to improve the police and youth relationships. The extended school day could be used to host these programs.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Chicago will be a safer place for all youth and police officers because youth and police officers have learned from and respect each other.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Many youth in Chicago do not have a good relationship with police; they do not really trust police and the same goes for the police's attitude toward youth. If both can't work together, how can we make Chicago better? Schools are a great place for the youth to come forward and express themselves to the police. This is also a great opportunity for the CPD to bond and get to know the youth and who they really are. The officers can learn about the youth and from the youth.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

There are plenty of programs that help police interact with youth and create a positive relationship, such as the CPD's "We Care" Role Model Program that works with youth in particular schools, but it does not use high school students and it has a limited reach.

We have seen examples of police departments in other cities implementing school-based youth programs. In LA, they have a program geared toward middle school students to keep them out of gangs. In New York, the police department has a summer camp for youth. We believe these programs are a strong way to build relationships and prevent crime.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Take at least one officer to each school twice a month so that s/he can give the students insight on the daily life of a CPD officer.
- While at schools, police can also get information from students on what goes on in their community from the student point of view.
- Police officers will train high school students so high school students can lead programs as well.

Chicago Police Department Recommendations: Training/Protocol

RECOMMENDATION 5:

New and current Chicago Police Officers should be required to take mandatory C.I.T (Crisis Intervention Training) training. This training includes a curriculum that instructs police officers on how to better deal with issues pertaining to youth.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Youth do not view Chicago police officers as their enemies but as their allies. Imagine a city where the youth can walk up to a Chicago police officer and say, “Hey, how are you? How’s work?” and actually have a conversation about life instead of arguing about why they have to go to the juvenile detention center. That sounds like “*Chicago, my kind of town*” - Frank Sinatra.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

The problem is that many police don’t know how to deal with youth properly. This leads to a lack of trust between youth and police officers. The C.I.T. training, that trains officers on de-escalating issues with youth, is currently optional in CPD, not mandatory.

The 2003-2008 table of juvenile arrest in Chicago shows that the majority of crimes that youth are arrested for are simple misdemeanors. For example, in 2008, 1,776 youth were arrested for disorderly conduct. Many of these arrests could have been avoided if police officers were trained differently on how to deal with youth.

The Youth Commission survey, which surveyed city employees, found that almost 50% of city workers disagreed with the statement, “Youth see police as a positive influence to their community.” This level of disagreement with this statement makes it evident that other citizens are aware of the problem.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

This issue needs to be fixed immediately because both youth and police officers have stereotypes about one another. This is caused by a lack of understanding among the police officers and youth. Crisis Intervention Training would strengthen relationships between the two.

On the City of Chicago Police Department website, the Crisis Intervention Training PowerPoint states the following:

- Prior to training, most officers would elect to arrest
- After training, most officers would elect to divert
- The key to this turn-around lies in the training

These three statements support the fact that police officers are less likely to arrest youth after attending the Crisis Intervention Training. Thus, the training allows for trust and better relationships to be built and for more youth to avoid entering the prison system.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Superintendent Gary McCarthy should enforce/make the training mandatory for new and existing Police Officers.
- A location should be established for the training. New officers would take C.I.T training as part of their Police Academy training. Current officers would take the C.I.T training in their districts.
- Mayor Emmanuel should support this movement and track progress so that the residents of Chicago can support policing improvement.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Every officer should carry a Taser along with a handgun. Prior to being issued the Taser, s/he should take a mandatory class that properly shows how to use a Taser correctly. Disciplinary consequences should be issued to officers who use a handgun in a situation where a Taser would have been more appropriate.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Imagine Chicago as a role model to other cities, with a great police department, extremely low murder rates, low crime rates, no “wrong” incidents with youth, no police beatings, and police kills (meaning police killing other people).

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

The problem is that both youth and police suffer when youth are shot by police, whether or not there was a misunderstanding at the scene. This needs to be solved immediately because we want to decrease unnecessary civilian deaths. Currently, to carry a Taser weapon, officers must undergo eight hours of training and it is not mandatory for every officer. Eight hours is not enough since there are still fatalities caused by incorrect Taser usage.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

Currently, 280 Tasers are in use by Chicago police officers. However, only sergeants and field training officers are allowed to carry them. The department is trying to assign one Taser to each squad car. How many officers typically ride in a squad car? The answer is two. This leads to the conclusion that not every officer will have a Taser gun, and some will have to rely on their firearm! (“Chicago police expanding Taser use,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 10, 2011, by Annie Sweeney and Kristen Schorsch).

In Cincinnati, a 19-year-old unarmed boy was shot by police, leading to community riots. Since then, the police have given Tasers to all officers, which has reduced the need for police officers to have physical and potentially violent encounters with resistant suspects. Now, the Cincinnati Police Department collaborates closely with the community.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Superintendent Gary McCarthy should make Taser training mandatory.
- One month of training would be provided for all current and new Chicago police officers.
- Training for new officers would be part of the academy curriculum and current officers would be trained in their assigned district.
- Officers must pass a Taser test and be “Taser certified”
- Chicago residents should find a way to show Chicago politicians that they want Tasers on every Chicago Police Officer!

Chicago Police Department Recommendations: Community Interaction

RECOMMENDATION 7:

Chicago police officers should be required to complete 20 hours of community service every quarter in the community they patrol.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Positive interaction will increase between the Police Department and community members in the City of Chicago. The Chicago Police Department and community members will break the chain of negativity towards each other.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Community members do not look at police officers as a positive addition to their neighborhoods, instead they are seen as a ?. It would be helpful for many officers if they had the chance to interact with the community they patrol in a positive way. By having the officers do community service hours in the community they patrol, more community members will feel more confidence in their district officers and have the opportunity to create a positive relationship with the officers.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

Youth Commissioner Thomas Hoskins interviewed a police officer and asked him, “What are your interactions with youth like?” The police officer answered, “Seems like whenever I communicate with them, it’s a negative reaction.” We met with two Chicago police officers and one of the officers we interviewed was Officer Ramirez. He told us that there was a Chicago police program called Strong Women At Tilden or S.W.A.T for short, a program held at Tilden High School on the city’s south side. Teenage girls who join S.W.A.T work closely with Chicago police officers, who work closely to help them in whatever situation they are in. S.W.A.T has made a big difference in the lives of those girls, so imagine what a difference it would make to have all police officers provide those twenty hours of service to their community.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Talk to Superintendent McCarthy to enforce this recommendation.
- The Chicago Police Department can reach out and work with community organizations to figure out ways for them to complete their 20 hours.

RECOMMENDATION 8:

Community members should be able to file a complaint in various forms *in addition to the existing online format (in writing, verbally, in person or by mail, telephone, Telephone Device for Deaf (TDD), facsimile, or electronic mail)*. Then there should be a public website where all complaints filed against police would be transparent and later addressed in CAPS meetings in each district.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Community members can have their concerns and complaints heard and responded to. Community members like knowing that their voice is heard, especially by the Chicago Police Department.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Comments, concerns and complaints are needed to improve the Police Department as a whole as well as the performance of individual officers. Currently complaints, concerns and comments can only be filed online. Many constituents do not have Internet access, which means they are not able to file a complaint, concern or comment. CAPS meetings were created to improve community relations, but individuals must be able to attend in person to find out how their issues have been addressed.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

The City of Cincinnati, Ohio Police Department has made many strides toward community policing. Part of their strategy is to improve communication between the police department and the community. The process of investigating a complaint is handled by internal investigation/the judicial system in the police department. Upon completion of the investigation, a report is forwarded to the police chief; then when the report is approved, constituents are informed in writing format of the outcome of the investigation and whether it was handled with non-disciplinary or disciplinary action. Currently, the City of Chicago Independent Police Review Authority website provides information on how to file a complaint but does not tell you how the complaint will be handled. The complaints are not visible to the public so citizens do not know the issues that are going on with the people who serve and protect us.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Organize a meeting with the IT team at CPD to find out ways the website can make complaints and investigations more transparent
- Have a meeting with the Superintendent of CPD to approve the idea and develop ways on how this recommendation will be expanded to the citizens.
- Discuss with commanders of the districts ways the implementations will improve their districts.
- Create advertisements so constituents now the different resources they can use to reach out to when they want do file a complaint, concern and comment.

CHICAGO TRANSIT AUTHORITY

As Chicago youth, we rely every day on public transportation. Yet, many of us have had difficulties using reduced fare orange cards. As a result, we often face confrontations and conflicts with the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) employees. In addition, buses and trains are often dirty and the employees are not always present at the train stations. Thus, youth can feel unsafe traveling, especially during the evening. In order to make travel safer and easier for youth, we chose to address the CTA this summer.

Summary of Recommendations for the Chicago Transit Authority:

Operations Recommendations

Recommendation 9: All Chicago Transit Authority train cars should have a trash can at every door. The trash cans should be cleaned out at the last stop prior to re-routing. Floor sweeping and a seat wipe down should also take place at that time.

Recommendation 10: The CTA should create a card, the “Chi-card,” that functions as a library card, school ID, and a CTA transit card. The card will allow youth to have unlimited rides between the hours of 5am-8pm. The card would be paid for out of school fees and would include unlimited rides.

Customer Service Recommendation

Recommendation 11: The city of Chicago should have Chicago Transit Authority employees attend mandatory customer service training in order to improve employee courtesy; comment boxes located on all train stations and buses as well as a hotline number will help ensure the effectiveness of the training.

Safety Recommendation

Recommendation 12: The Chicago Transit Authority should have police department kiosks spread equally across train station lines (Blue line, Red line, Green line etc.). The emergency buttons already located in all CTA train stations would alert the police stations located throughout the lines.

Chicago Transit Authority Recommendations

These recommendations are just examples of the kind of ideas youth could develop if the Youth Commission is put into place. If the Youth Commission was charged with coming up with recommendations to improve the Chicago Transit Authority, we would begin by doing the following research:

- Survey youth and adults who take the CTA on a daily basis
- Interview or survey more CTA employees at every level of the organization
- Interview Director Claypool to find out what issues are most important to him and to learn from his expertise
- Attend any public CTA meetings, including budget meetings
- Meet with other community organizations who work on transportation issues
- Look at other cities to see what they have done to improve their transit authorities

Chicago Transit Authority Recommendations: Operations

RECOMMENDATION 9:

All Chicago Transit Authority train cars should have a trash can at every door. The trash cans should be cleaned out at the last stop prior to re-routing. Floor sweeping and a seat wipe down should also take place at that time.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

We will be able to ensure that passengers within the city have a healthy, sanitary, comfortable ride to and from their destination. Also, no more worries about where to put their trash on the trains.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

As passengers, riding the train/bus can be difficult for due to the lack of sanitation. We do not want to sit in seats with food on them, or stand in areas that smell, have food on the floor, and spills. This is very important because unsanitary places can be very harmful to our health. Having trash cans on trains (just as the buses do) will stop passengers from throwing garbage or food on the floor, because they have no place else to put it.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

- We interviewed eleven people who ride the train/bus, and asked them, “What is your top issue with CTA overall?” Eight people stated that their top issue with CTA was that it was not clean.
- When we asked, “On a scale of 1-5, what would you rate how clean CTA is?” the majority of our respondents rated 1 and 2.
- The council split into groups of 3 and each rode a different CTA line within the city, to the end of the line and back. We made observations and one thing many of us had in common was how unclean the trains were, especially outside of the loop. One group

rode the same train car going away from the city as returning and noted that even after it had hit the end of the line, a half eaten sandwich remained on the floor.

- Students noted when riding the brown line that they felt extremely safe. When asked why, they said because “it was so clean.” Cleanliness helps create safety.

RECOMMENDATION 10:

The CTA should create a card, the “Chi-card,” that functions as a library card, school ID, and a CTA transit card. The card will allow youth to have unlimited rides between the hours of 5am-8pm. The card would be paid for out of school fees and would include unlimited rides.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE..

Youth will not have to worry about having enough money to get to and from school.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

In order to use the reduced fare card on trains, you must show your student permit, then the CTA worker will then let you through. Most of the time, the CTA workers are not present in the area at the time, so youth have problems using them which makes them late to their destination. This card would eliminate the problem of students being late and waiting on a CTA worker to let them through, even when they do have their permit present. It also would save students the trouble of carrying different cards they use every day, all day.

Another problem is that many students cannot afford to get to school. Because of this, their attendance rates drop. It is not that they don't want to go, but that they cannot afford to get there.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

This idea already exists in Washington, D.C. There, they have the “one card,” that does all of these things and it has been effective. It also exists in San Francisco, where they have the “muni pass,” which was campaigned by the youth commission there, and it has been effective as well.

Ideas for Implementation:

- The Chi-card would be sold to all CPS students. On the back of each card there would be a serial number that will represent the owner of the card.
- If a student is on free or reduced lunch, they should get the card for free.

Chicago Transit Authority Recommendations: Customer Service

RECOMMENDATION 11:

The city of Chicago should have Chicago Transit Authority employees attend mandatory customer service training in order to improve employee courtesy; comment boxes located on all train stations and buses as well as a hot line number will help ensure the effectiveness of the training.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM A CITY WHERE...

Passengers love and enjoy using the CTA, where employees are positive and it would be a warm and welcoming environment. Where youth will feel more comfortable voicing their opinion and there will be a better relationship between CTA employees and passengers. In our dream city, not everyone would own a vehicle, but for those who do not, they would not use the CTA just out of necessity but because they love the CTA employees' personalities and the way they do their job.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Good employee customer relations are essential in relieving tension among CTA employees and customers. However, the problem lies in the fact that many CTA employees do not treat their customers with courtesy and respect, affecting the overall efficiency of the CTA riding experience. We want to ensure tranquility, thus improving customer employee relations. CTA employees will be more productive and the overall department more effective.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

In several interviews of youth from around the city, the youth said that CTA employees treated them disrespectfully. For example, youth said that the main problems they face are "rude bus drivers." Some students also stated that they felt uncomfortable and disrespected by CTA employees, saying, "They have no respect for youth and look down at us."

Also, from recent research we realized that this comment box/hotline method would be very beneficial to the passengers. Due to high call volume, callers may receive busy signals. On the Regional Transportation Authority website they stated, "If you receive a busy signal please try your call again later." Our system would reduce the hassle and create more outlets where passengers can voice their comments, concerns, or complaints, including comment boxes on CTA buses and train stations and also via texting, creating multiple outlets. That way, voicing an opinion is not much of a hassle and can be done in a matter of seconds.

Ideas for Implementation:

- Have stricter hiring policies and a longer interviewing phase for CTA employees.
- Include a trial run process as a part of the application to see hands-on how the employee communicates and works closely with passengers.
- More allocation of funds for classes to train employees. In many cases you may get positive and negative feedback. Employees should be rewarded for great feedback, but

in cases where there is negative feedback nothing should be given or taken from them unless the behavior does not improve.

Chicago Transit Authority Recommendations: Safety

RECOMMENDATION 12:

The Chicago Transit Authority should have police department kiosks spread equally across train station lines (Blue line, Red line, Green line etc.). The emergency buttons already located in all CTA train stations would alert the police stations located throughout the lines.



IF THIS RECOMMENDATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WE DREAM OF A CITY WHERE

The city of Chicago transit system will become safer to all citizens due to the fact that Chicago police officers will be patrolling the train.

THE PROBLEM AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT:

Due to recent attacks on civilians by flash mobs (groups of kids who steal expensive phones) crime on the CTA has become an issue of pressing importance. A recent example of crime on the CTA includes a 68-year-old woman who was pushed down stairs and killed at the Fullerton train station by a young man who had stolen a smart phone from another passenger. If police kiosks were located inside train stations, police presence would deter criminals and prevent crime from taking place. The addition of police presence will also ensure improvement with another security measures that the city has in place: the emergency buttons that are displayed on the train instead of a delayed response from a busy train conductor, a real police officer will be on the spot to assist customers if the customer feels his/her safety is threatened, and creating a safer environment for CTA customer.

EVIDENCE FOR THE RECOMMENDATION:

Overall crime on the CTA has increased by more than 5 % in 2010 compared to 2009. Robberies and theft showed the biggest jumps, with 39 % and 14 % increases, respectively. (www.chicagonow.com/tattler/2011) Thus, we need more police kiosks to help curb that rate.

Ideas for Implementation:

Two police officers should be issued for each train station; one officer will patrol the platform to ensure that train stations are safe and the other officer will stay in an office handling customer safety issues. The “new” police kiosk at each train station will actually be an existing kiosk from each station currently in use by CTA employees that is now shared between both police officers and CTA employees. If the immediate safety of a customer is threatened, the already existing emergency buttons located each CTA train station would alert the officer at office to warn the officers that a customers’ safety is in jeopardy.

Conclusion

In conclusion, youth and adults do not often partner in government for many reasons, including:

- Adults do not really reach out to youth to get their perspective on things because they may think they know what is best for youth;
- Adults sometimes stereotype youth and do not really give them a chance;
- Youth want to give their input but many do not know how;
- Youth are often afraid of being rejected by adults and some feel there are not enough opportunities for youth to express their opinions;
- Some youth think adults will just see them as fooling around and not take them seriously.

All of these obstacles, however, can be overcome. If adults and decision makers partner with youth and make them and their ideas feel important, then youth would come forward. No one group, whether it is adults or youth, can improve the city alone, but if this partnership is formed and a bridge can be built, not only will government be better, but the city as a whole.

Ultimately, we hope that this report is a first step toward Chicago creating a Youth Commission that is authentic and institutionalized. We believe that youth ideas are valuable and that Chicago will be a stronger city with youth at the table.

Appendix

Complete List of Recommendations:

Youth Governance:

Recommendation 1:

The city of Chicago should have an institutionalized youth council. This council would have two levels. The first level would be primarily responsible for meeting with the Mayor and other stakeholders. The second level would be primarily responsible for collecting data, information, and opinions from community youth groups and organizations and presenting it to the first council.

Recommendation 2:

The city of Chicago should have meetings for youth from each ward to discuss issues in their community, with incentives for those who attend the meetings. The youth at these meetings would report back to the institutionalized council.

Chicago Police Department:

Youth Interaction Recommendations

Recommendation 3: The local police district should be required to have meetings with the youth in the community. At these meetings, police and youth can work together to fix everyday problems youth face and to improve police strategies for dealing with youth.

Recommendation 4: There should be programs in every elementary school (beginning at 3rd grade) that are co-facilitated by police officers and high school youth to improve police and youth relationships. The extended school day could be used to host these programs.

Training/Protocol Recommendations

Recommendation 5: New and current Chicago Police Officers should be required to take mandatory C.I.T (Crisis Intervention Training) training. This training includes a curriculum that instructs police officers on how to better deal with issues pertaining to youth.

Recommendation 6: Every officer should carry a Taser along with a handgun. Prior to being issued the Taser, s/he should take a mandatory class that properly shows how to use a Taser correctly. Disciplinary consequences should be issued to officers who use a handgun in a situation where a Taser would have been more appropriate.

Community Interaction Recommendations

Recommendation 7: Chicago Police officers should be required to complete 20 hours of community service every quarter in the community they patrol.

Recommendation 8: Community members should be able to file a complaint in various forms in addition to the existing online format (in writing, verbally, in person or by mail, telephone, Telephone Device for Deaf (TDD), facsimile, or electronic mail). Then there should be a public website where all complaints filed against police would be transparent and later addressed in CAPS meetings in each district

Chicago Transit Authority:*Operations Recommendations*

Recommendation 9: All Chicago Transit Authority train cars should have a trash can at every door. The trash cans should be cleaned out at the last stop prior to re-routing. Floor sweeping and a seat wipe down should also take place at that time.

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Safety Recommendation

Recommendation 12: The Chicago Transit Authority should have police department kiosks spread equally across train station lines (Blue line, Red line, Green line etc.). The emergency buttons already located in all CTA train stations would alert the police stations located throughout the lines.

Guest Speaker List

Interview of Michael Shields, Director of Safety and Security, CPS

A.L.S.O executive director David Cassel re. Police issues

Interview of Civil Rights Attorney, Al Gerhardstein, from Cincinnati, OH re. Police issues

Interview of Anna Yearley, Head of Political Relations to the Leader of the Opposition in the UK

Interview of Brian Brady and Mikva Challenge Alums

Interview of Officer Patricia Ramirez and Officer Michael Hawlitzky, CPD

Site Visit

South West Youth Collaborative: Generation Y

2749 W 63rd Chicago, IL.

Urban Underground

4850 W. Fond Du Lac Ave

Milwaukee, WI 53216

[414-444-8726](tel:414-444-8726)

Milwaukee City Hall- Milwaukee Youth Council

200 E. Wells

Milwaukee, WI 53202

Works Referenced

Youth Governance Links

Authentic Youth Civic Engagement: A Guide for Municipal Leaders

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<http://www.strategiesforyouth.org/archives/stopwatch.htm>

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San Francisco

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Mikva Adult Facilitators:

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Director of Student Advocacy and Research, Jessica Gingold

Youth Commission Operations Director, Ayeshia Johnson, AJ@mikvachallenge.org