



Blue Island Community Science Meeting #2

Agenda



- Last Meeting
- Goal of Today
- Factors the Funder Wants Us to Consider
- Factors When Deciding the Research Question
- Revised Questions
- Discussion
- Voting & Results
- Break
- Municipal Budgeting & Equity by Lauren Burdette
- Next Steps

*RECORD



Last Meeting



Goal For the Day

Determine a finalized research question and learn about Municipal Budgets.

Factors the Funder Wants Us to Consider

Impact

Specific Value

Incorporating
Decision Makers

Factors When Deciding a Research Question

Ultimate
Goal and
Impact

Your
Investment

Follow Up
Questions

Community
Education

- What is the ultimate goal and impact to the community of this question?
- How invested do you want to be for the research?
- Are there sub questions or follow up questions to this question?
- How can the larger community be incorporated into this work or be educated based on the question?

Revised Research Question Options


1. How can Blue Island residents, through civic processes, achieve successful results affecting rainwater management and flooding?
 - a. In the past, how have residents been impacted by decisions made about them? Who has benefited and who has not?
2. What are the mechanisms through which the City of Blue Island chooses public works priorities?
 - a. Who has benefited and who has not in past choices?
3. How many brownfields (abandoned, contaminated industrial properties with potential for redevelopment) are in Blue Island, where are they located, and what plans does the city have for these sites?
 - a. How can we stimulate the civic processes required to obtain available funding?

Discussion

- Are there any new questions or edits to current questions?
- Which is your favorite question?
- Why? How does it relate to the factors we reviewed?
- Questions or comments you want others to consider?



The List of Questions to Vote On

-
- Option 1:
 - Option 2:
 - Option 3:
- 

Voting

Roman Voting Activity:
The group must rank options based on their favorite option, their least favorite option, and for something in between. Please type your responses in the chat.



Results – Winning Question

1. How many brownfields (abandoned, contaminated industrial properties with potential for redevelopment) are in Blue Island, where are they located, and what plans does the city have for these sites?
 - a. How can we stimulate the civic processes required to obtain available funding?
 - b. In the past, how have residents been impacted by decisions made about them? Who has benefited and who has not?
 - c. What community benefits (flooding mitigation, youth programming, business growth, etc) are possible and desired by residents on remediated brownfields throughout the city? How can we make those into plans that are funded and implemented?



Break

Cyatharine set up break out rooms!



Municipal Budgeting & Equity By Lauren Burdette



Next Steps

- Reflect on the training, what's something you took away from it? How might it help with the research question?
- Next full group session will be on December 18 from 6-8pm

Thank you



Budgets, Equity, and More!

Presentation for CNT
October 16, 2024
Lauren Burdette, LBurd LLC

Goals for Tonight



1. Know where to find the municipal budget
2. Understand how to read a municipal budget
3. Understand how to ensure a budget is equitable and where money is spent
4. Know the most effective opportunities for advocacy in shifting spending priorities

Facilitator: Lauren Burdette

- Equity Systems Consultant
- Formerly Deputy Chief Equity Officer at City of Chicago Mayor's Office
- Created and led first-ever Budget Equity effort for Chicago



What is a budget?

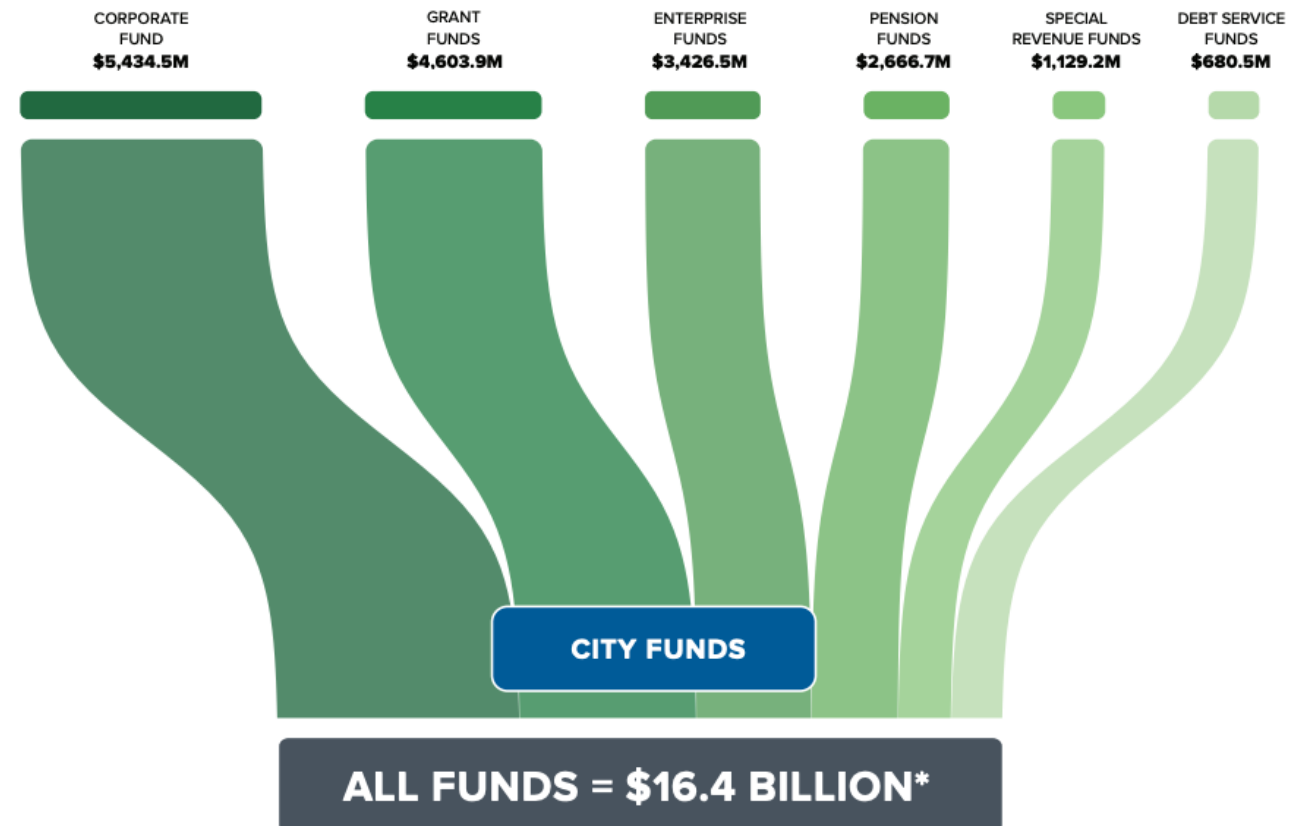
- A written plan that helps a city manage its money by tracking revenue and expenses over a set period of time
- Each municipality has a different fiscal year (Jan-Dec, July-June, etc.)
- Budgets are revisited multiple times per year and adjusted as needed
- Budgets are also statements of values – where we spend money indicates what we care about most



To make it a little more complicated...

- Most cities have multiple funds (general fund, water fund, etc.) that make up “the budget”
- Revenue is total amount of money brought in over a period of time (e.g. taxes, TIF, fees, fines, interest on investments)
- Be sure to look at what the City Council/Mayor refer to when they are discussing the budget

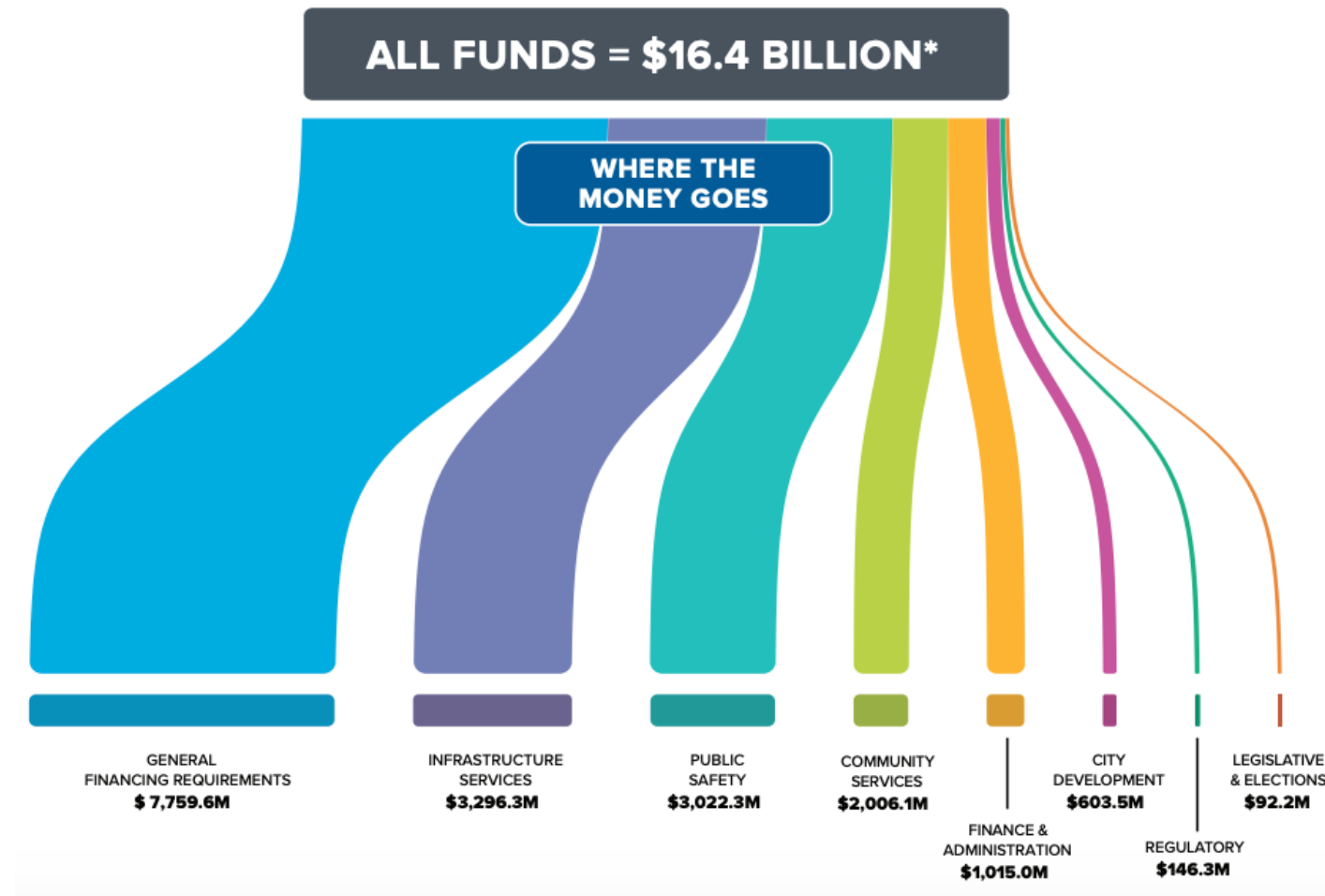
Funds that make up “the City of Chicago Budget” (2023)



\$16.4B is spent in many ways


- An **appropriation** is the legal authorization to spend a specific amount of money for a specific purpose, such as a particular agency or program; it can rise/fall based on mid-year adjustments
- Expenses refer to the spending of money (personnel, services, programs, etc.)
- Sometimes money is appropriated but not spent

Major spending categories for City of Chicago
2023



Guide to finding a municipal budget

- Google “city name budget” (“Blue Island Budget”) – typically the newest budget will show up
- Within a city department page, find the Budget Department
- Budget Overview = great place to start
- Look for most recent appropriation

18  35 CITY OF BLUE ISLAND

Home Government Citizen Information City Departments For Business News & Events

[Home](#) / [Citizen Information](#) / Budget

BUDGET

- [FY 2024 Appropriations Ordinance Posted 3-26-24 - DRAFT](#)
- [FY 2023 Appropriations Ordinance Posted 3-7-23](#)
- [FY 2022 Appropriations Ordinance Posted 3-12-22](#)
- [2021 Appropriations](#)
- [2020 Appropriations](#)
- [2019 Appropriations](#)
- [2018 Appropriations](#)
- [2017 Appropriations](#)
- [2016 Appropriations](#)
- [2015 Appropriations](#)
- [2014 May-Dec Appropriations](#)

3 min - Pause & Practice!



See if you can find the following budgets:

- City of Chicago
- Metropolitan Water Reclamation District
- Cook County
- State of Illinois

Quickfire: What questions/challenges did you come across?

Reading a Municipal Budget – Key Pieces to Look for



How big is the “main” budget?



How does the city earn money? (Revenue)



How does the city spend money? (Expenses)



What plan (if any) is the budget based on?

Small Group Practice!

Instructions

- You'll be split into 2-3 small groups to practice high-level budget reading.
- You'll be looking at Blue Island's Budget
- Everyone write down your answers; we will return to them later
- Nominate a speaker to share your answers when we return full group
- If you finish early, try to answer these questions with the City of Chicago budget!

Questions you are answering

1. How much was appropriated to the "general fund" in 2023? How much was actual spent in 2023?
2. What was the total actual revenue and total expenses in 2023 (not just in the general fund)?
3. What are some examples of revenues the city brings in?
4. What funds do you notice the city has? Which are the biggest?
5. What are the largest expenses in the general fund?
6. Is there a plan you can find that guides this?

Answers for Blue Island

1. \$23.8M Appropriated;
\$19.7M actual
2. \$39.1M expenses \$40.5M
revenue
3. Property tax, sales tax, motor
tax, vehicle tax, permits, fees
4. General fund, water fund,
police pension
5. Police, Fire, Public Works
6. Nope!

Source: <https://blueisland.org/wp-content/uploads/citizen-information/budget/FY-2024-Budget-Final.pdf>

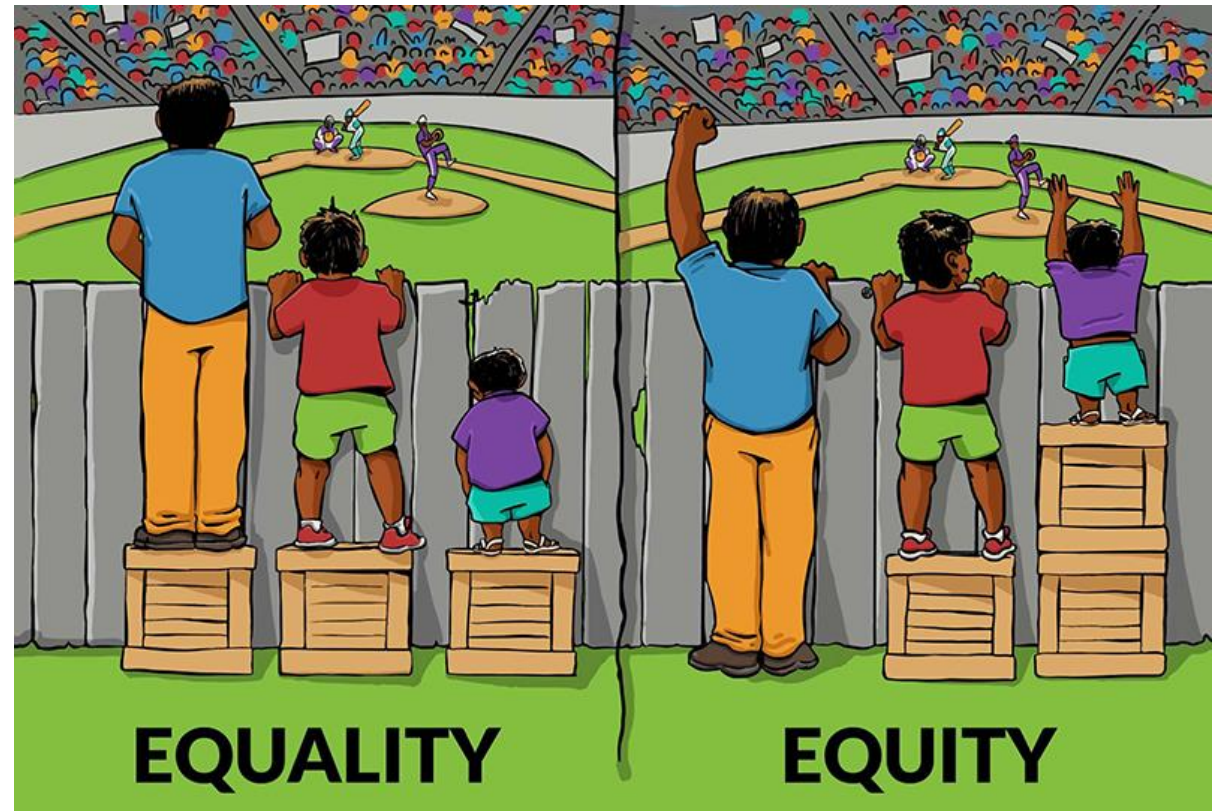
Questions before part 2?

Part 2: Equity and the Budget

What do we mean when we say “equity?”

The City of Chicago defines equity as both an **outcome** and a **process** that results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive.

[Chicago.gov/Equity](https://www.chicago.gov/Equity)



What do we mean when we say “equity?”

As an [outcome](#), equity results in fair and just access to opportunity and resources that provide everyone the ability to thrive. Acknowledging the present and historical inequality that persist in our society, equity is a future state we strive to create where identity and social status no longer predestine life outcomes.

What do we mean when we say “equity?”

As a process, equity requires a new way of doing business: one that

- (1) prioritizes access and opportunities for groups who have the greatest need;
- (2) methodically evaluates benefits and burdens produced by seemingly neutral systems and practices; and
- (3) engages those most impacted by the problems we seek to address as experts in their own experiences, strategists in co-creating solutions, and evaluators of success.

How do you know if a budget is equitable?

- Budgets are complex! Hard to say if a budget is “equitable” or “inequitable”
- Can look at overall revenues/expenses – who is paying for things and who is receiving things?
- Analyze “who benefits from X the most” and “who is most burdened/harmed by X”
- Within a program, how is funding distributed?
- The process/outcomes framework can help us in thinking about equitable budgets



Budget Equity - Process

- How did the budget get developed?
- What engagement with communities existed? Which communities?
- How meaningful was that engagement?
- Do you know if the community feedback was taken into consideration?

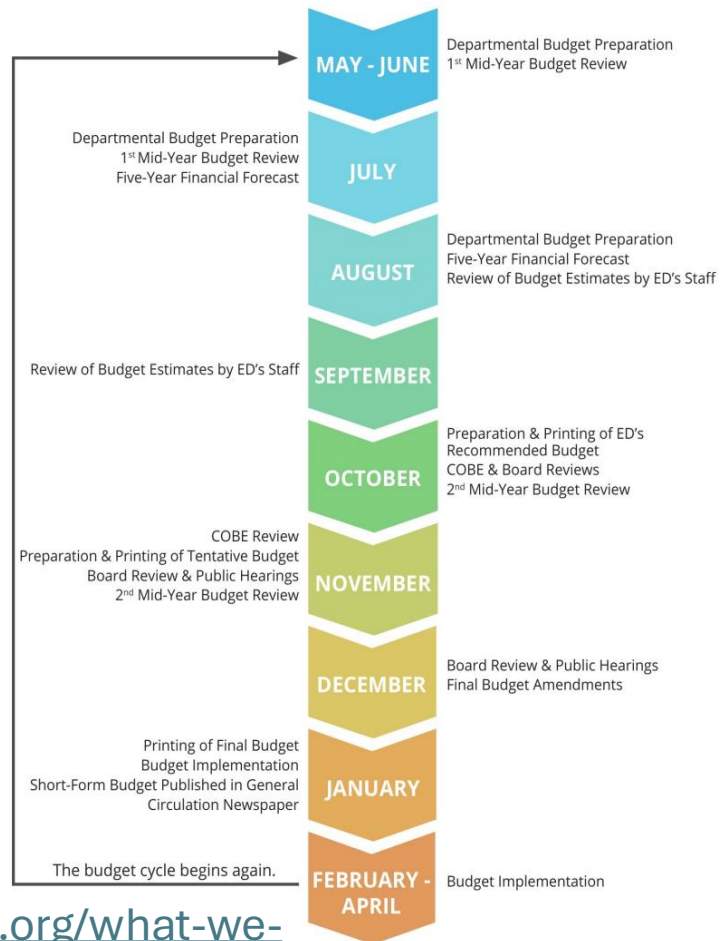
Best Practice: People's Budget Chicago



<https://www.peoplesbudgetchicago.com>

Budget Equity Process Best Practices

MWRD Budget Timeline & Transparency



COBE - Committee on Budget and Employment
ED - Executive Director

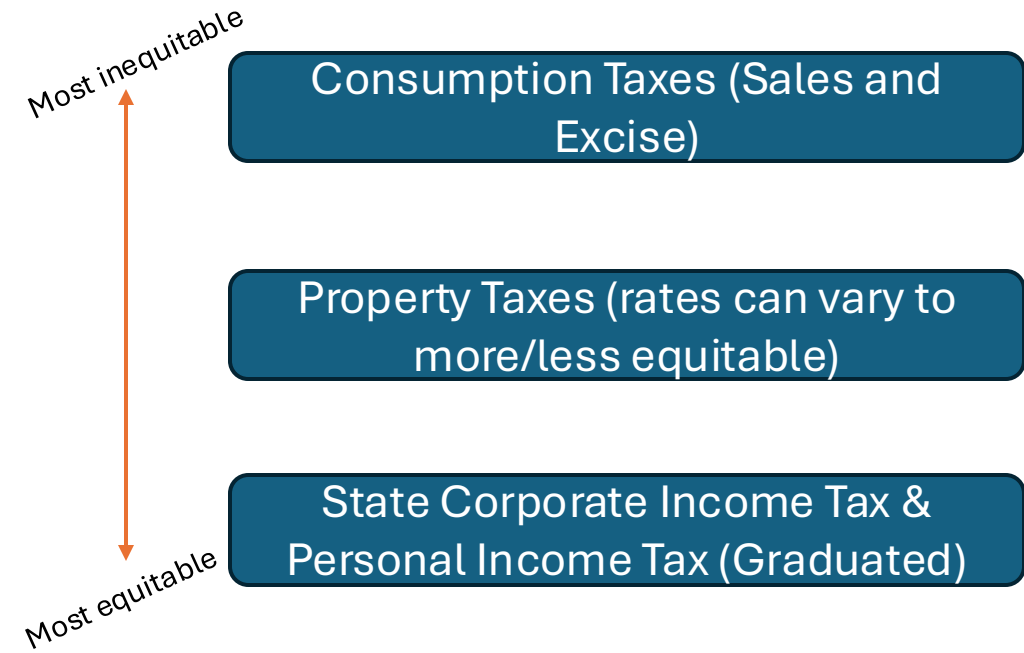
People's Budget Chicago



<https://www.peoplesbudgetchicago.com>

<https://mwrdd.org/what-we-do/budget>

Budget Equity Outcomes – Revenue



- Keep an eye on the TYPES of revenues your government uses – this has significant equity implications
- Who is most burdened by a revenue suggestion?
- Regressive = inequitable (low-income people are more heavily burdened than high income people)
- Is this a property tax increase? Who is impacted by that the most? Is it a sales tax increase? Who is impacted by that the most? etc.
- Graduated income & corporate taxes are the most equitable revenue source

“Most states require low- and middle-income families to pay higher effective tax rates than the wealthy.”

- [Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy](#)

Budget Equity Outcomes - Expenses

- Where is the money being spent? Who is benefitting from it?
- Budgets can tell you *some* of this information (like how much police get compared to public works), but it doesn't tell you within each program/department how the funds are prioritized
- Budget hearings are a key time to ask for those details and commitments
- Process equity impacts outcome equity

Example: Vaccine Funding

- In 2023, Chicago budgeted \$76.9M for vaccination against preventable diseases.
- The budget doesn't provide detail about who they are prioritizing – this is a strategy the department staff will implement.
- To ensure equity within the vaccine program, you must engage with department staff



Budget Equity Outcomes - Best Practices

Build and utilize a community/gov't plan



2022
CAP CHICAGO CLIMATE ACTION PLAN



WESTERN AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY

Chicago's community-driven vision for an equitable transit-oriented corridor

Organize! Use numbers and stories

Chicago Tribune

Aaron Feldman: Let's fix Western Avenue and make Chicago stronger

The study calls for converting about 4.5 miles of Western to mostly B3-3 zoning, which allows for denser mixed use-development.

Jun 14, 2024



Streetsblog Chicago

Western Avenue alders revived Chicago's BRT dream. How can we stop NIMBYs from killing it again?

The chief of staff for Ald. Matt Martin (47th), a leader of the new campaign, says times have changed since the Ashland BRT proposal was shelved.

May 23, 2024



Block Club Chicago

Citywide Rapid Bus Route Should Come To Western Avenue, Aldermen Say

The rapid bus route would provide a speedier north-south public transit route along the city's longest street, 17 alderpeople said.

May 22, 2024



Burd, LLC

Final Group Activity

- Imagine you are trying to get additional money for flood mitigation in Blue Island.
 - Who is MOST impacted by flooding?
 - One guess of mine: Senior citizens, those with chronic conditions and children living in homes that grow mold - can be life-threatening
 - How can you bring them into your coalition?
 - Which departments/people in gov't should you build relationships with?
 - Which government budgets should you focus on?
 - When should you engage the gov't teams?
 - Who else in your community could be helpful allies?

Reminder: city isn't the only budget!

- Townships, school districts, forest preserves, counties, states, and the federal government also tax and have budgets, among others!
- This means even if a city makes progress on less regressive taxes, another taxing body might not be.
- When thinking about advocacy, look at key places within each budget to drive change

Quickfire: What are some departments you could look at across different budgets for flood mitigation funding?

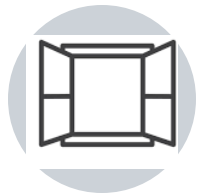
Summary: effective ways to drive change

- Engage early and often - build relationships with city department officials (not just elected ones)
- Build strong diverse coalitions and keep connected
- Leverage “Moments of Opportunity” - current events, elections, crises

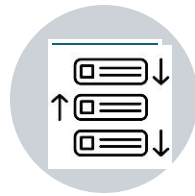


Image from [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

Opportunities for Advocacy – What to ask for



More transparency



Prioritization & Sequencing of funds (who gets it first?)



More money (may not always be possible; watch for regressive sources)



Reports and media stories



City definition of equity and staff training



Philanthropic funding for People's Budget-type activities

Questions?



Thank you!

Lauren Burdette

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Additional Resources/Bibliography

- Blue Island Budget - <https://blueisland.org/citizen-information/budget/>
- MWRD Budget - <https://mwrld.org/what-we-do/budget>
- Cook County Budget - <https://www.cookcountyl.gov/agency/budget-and-management-services>
- City of Chicago Budget - <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/obm/provdrs/budget.html>
- City of Chicago Office of Equity and Racial Justice Website – [Chicago.gov/Equity](https://www.chicago.gov/equity)
- People’s Budget and Chicago United for Equity: <https://www.peoplesbudgetchicago.com> & <https://www.chicagounitedforequity.org/>
- Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy - <https://itep.org/whopays-7th-edition/#10-most-regressive-state-and-local-tax-systems>
- City of Chicago Climate Action Plan: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/climate-action-plan/home.html>