

**Robbins & Blue Island  
Community Science  
Meeting 4**

# Agenda

Reminder of Research Question

Questions on Brownfield Remediation (Blue Island)

Determining a research method

Discussion

Who should we talk to (Robbins)

Break

Communications

Next Steps for Grant Writing

Close Out

# Reminder of Research Question (Robbins)

## **Main Question:**

How do we get people to come back to Robbins? What community benefits of green stormwater infrastructure do people want to see in Robbins?

## **Sub Questions:**

- How do we realize long term investments in Robbins through these community benefits?
- How do we make sure we can fix the flooding problems so businesses can come in and trust it's okay to invest here so we can build Robbins' economy?
- How can we honor the history of Robbins as we install the stormwater infrastructure?

# Reminder of Research Question (Blue Island)

## **Main Question:**

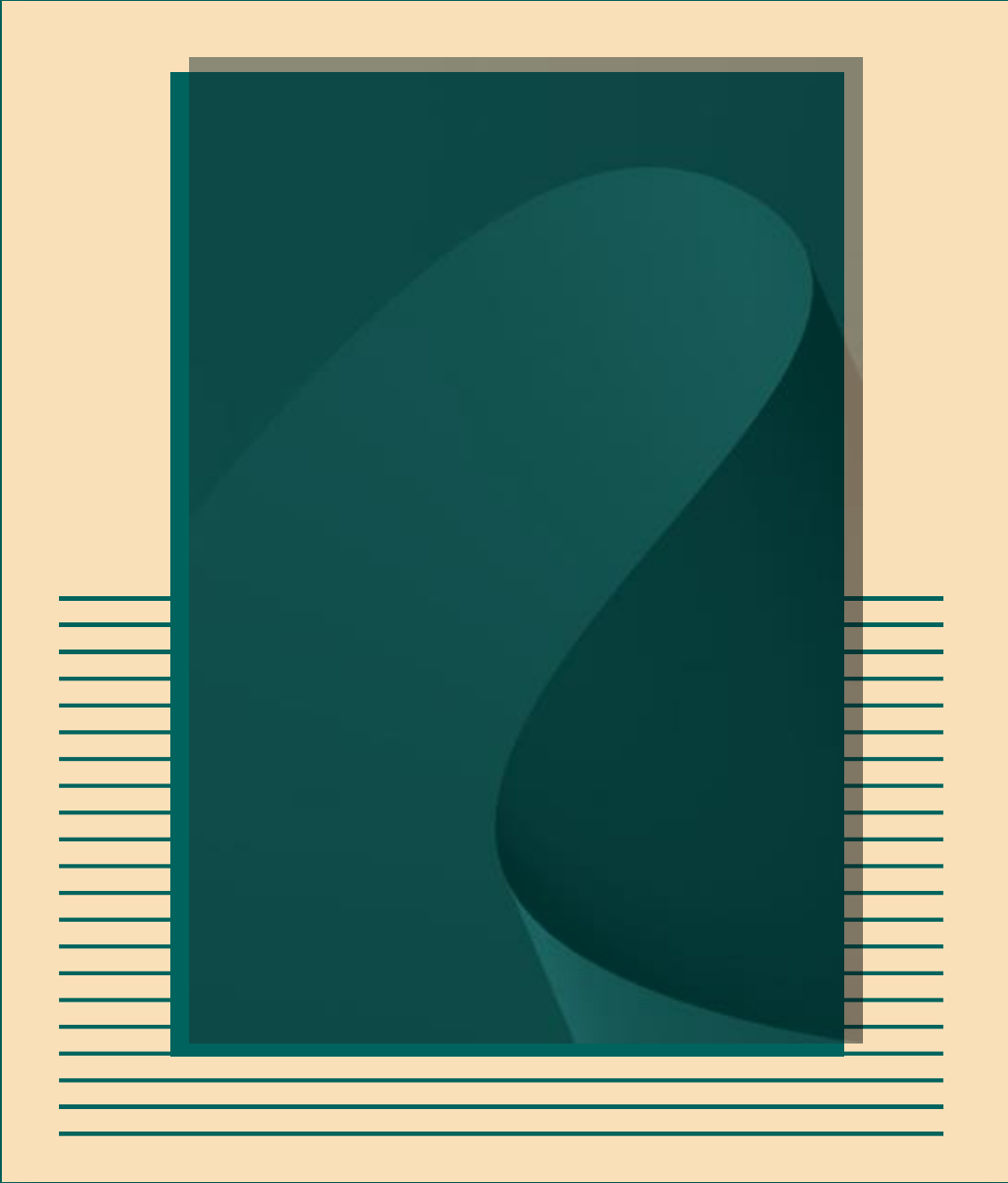
How many brownfields (abandoned, contaminated, industrial properties with potential for redevelopment) are in Blue Island, where are they located, and what plans does the city have for these sites?

## **Sub Questions:**

- How can we stimulate the civic processes required to obtain available funding specifically for brownfields?
- In the past, how have residents been impacted by decisions made about brownfields? Who has benefited and who has not?
- 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 incorporate those benefits into plans that are funded and implemented?

# Questions (Blue Island)

What do we want to learn from Cook County Department of Environment & Sustainability about the brownfield remediation process?



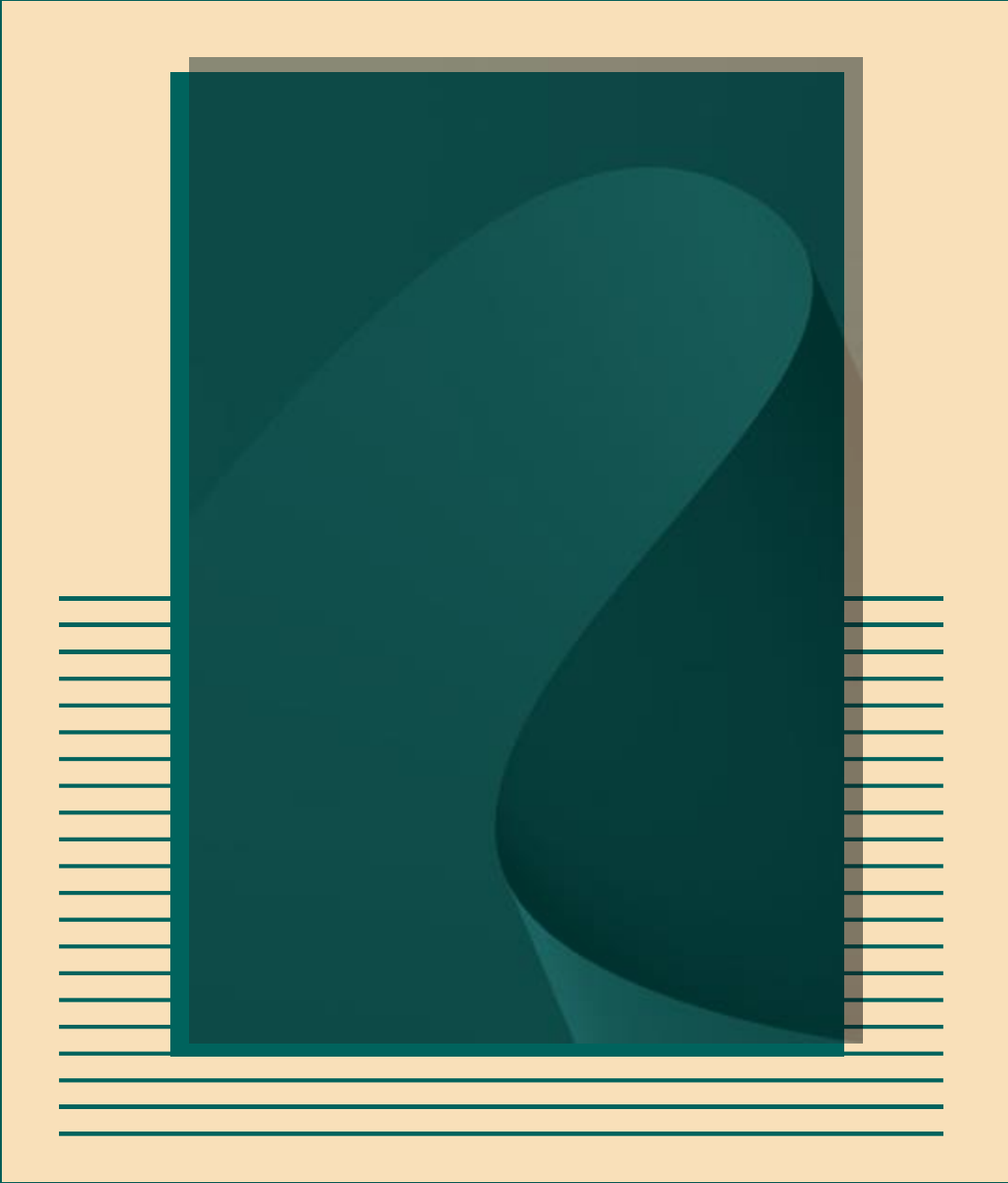
# Determining a Research Method

## Qualitative Research

- Interviews
- Archival review (document analysis)
- Focus groups
- Photos
- Participant observations (document own experience)
- Storytelling workshops
- Surveys

## Quantitative Research

- Mapping locations
- Looking at costs and seeing the change over time
- Looking at costs spent in certain locations
- Getting demographic information of an area
- Behavioral counts
- Checklists of what participants need
- Surveys



## Discussion

What methods would be best to answer the above research questions?

By the end, we need to come up with a method for each question, and who would be the target audience.

## ROBBINS

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**Break**

# **Robbins: Who Should we Talk to**

If/How to navigate cliques

# Communications



# Goals

- Understand the different audiences to talk to and purposes to talk about when it comes to community advocacy
- Understand how to reach out to an elected official about something you care about
- Practice the above using the research question
- Understand how to connect with media

# Research Question | ROBBINS

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# Audiences and Why | ROBBINS

Community Members	Staff at the Government	Elected Officials	The Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They live it everyday, they can contribute ideas for the research</li><li>• Can educate us on what's important to them, their ideas</li><li>• Important to get a variety of perspectives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get ideas of how to bring business</li><li>• May have ideas of what funding to bring</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We can share what we learned from community members to them so that elected officials can be on the same page --&gt; develop things in our community based vision</li><li>• Have a bigger picture of what the community needs to get things done</li><li>• Get ideas of what to bring</li><li>• Finding the funding from the state (and bringing community folks)</li></ul>	



# Audiences and Why | ROBBINS

Community Members	Staff at the Government	Elected Officials	The Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate</li> <li>• To build your base (who is excited to support the work)</li> <li>• To understand their desires and needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand progress on a project</li> <li>• To understand how implementation happens, including challenges</li> <li>• To get clarity on priorities they're working on</li> <li>• To understand their department's budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate on them your issue</li> <li>• To convince them to take an action</li> <li>• To learn who else to talk to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To get attention</li> <li>• To educate/increase awareness</li> </ul>

# Audiences and Why | BLUE ISLAND

Community Members	Staff at the Government	Elected Officials	The Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To see what's important to them, what are their needs, understanding how they've been impacted</li><li>• Value input and transparency and want to get people more involved in the vision/mission</li><li>• With community interest they care about it which can drive the project, its implementation and care.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They make the project happen, they stay through administrations. Tell you what needs to get done to make it happen.</li><li>• They know who to talk to, what direction (sometimes more than elected officials)</li><li>• They can assist to get stuff done on site</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get their approval for projects – so need their buy in to get something done</li></ul> <p data-bbox="1528 928 1834 1328">+</p> <p data-bbox="1681 1185 1834 1328">+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Helps inform people, especially for broad reach</li><li>• Can help sell the idea of the project/ get people bought into it</li><li>• With more people on board can get the project moving</li></ul>

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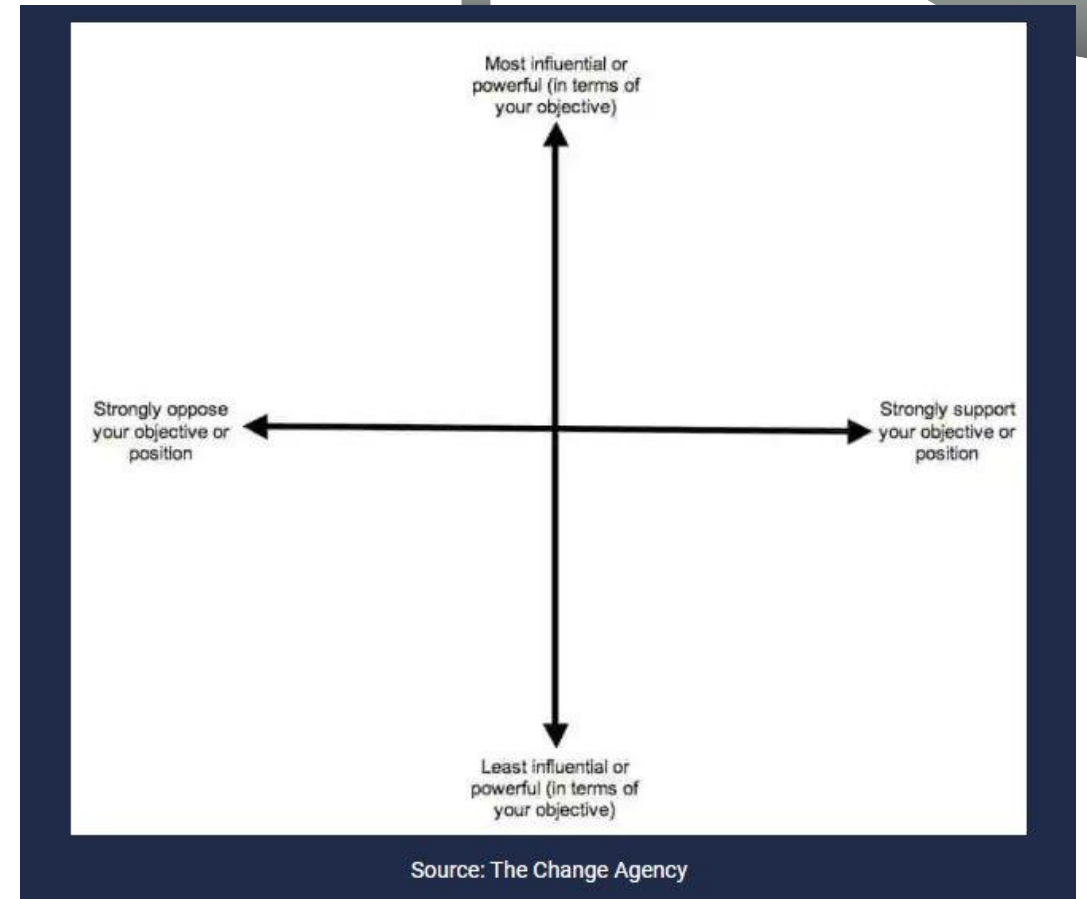


# Focus: Elected Officials

- Transferable skills from other parts of your life
  - Relationship building
  - Clearly stating why it matters to them
  - Creating an agenda with a clear purpose
  - Clear language

# Before Choosing to Meet Your Elected Officials

- Clarify why meeting with an official is important for your group.
- Consider doing a power map: Identify who your target official is
  - Who has the power to get your project or campaign to happen?
  - Who can influence the people who have power to get your campaign to happen?
  - Who can help you get what you want to have happen?
- Prepare
  - Pull together any data to have on hand at the meeting.
  - Gather stories from the group and community members about how the issue impacts them.



# Personal Story | ROBBINS

- If you want them to listen to you, it's helpful to be more involved in the public meetings. Show face, let them know you care!
- Get to know the elected officials, get to know what they do in the community outside of their elected officials. Attend their community meetings like "Tea with Tiffany". Mayor has held meetings to show people how to get a house and finance them.
- When the floor is open at the community meeting, share your opinion (positive and negative) – and they usually address it. The staff is happy to explain how something works
- Say hi to them when you see them around the village
- Listen to the town hall meetings and ask questions
- Look at the postings in the community center, or the water bill announcements
- Community Center is a great place to start – Angie is super helpful

# Personal Story | BLUE ISLAND

- Like a reporter, you go to the meetings so that the elected officials get used to seeing you. Over time, politicians may start chatting with you and want to develop a personal relationship.
- Get people to know you – getting familiar with you
- Make your voice known at public meetings or via email – share opinion, be the squeaky wheel because then they'll want to talk to you when they work on plans
- Set up meetings with them to get to know their ideas and plans
- Keep the relationship going over time

## 2 Approaches

**Officials you know and have a relationship with**

**Officials you don't know or won't cooperate with you**

Always try to do a private meeting first. Only go to a public meeting if you can't get what you want from them in the private meeting. This builds good will for them publicly instead of putting them under pressure in public.

Challenge them when they've already said no. Not before.

Reach out to local, county, and state representatives when you are looking for money for an initiative. You can go to the general assembly for funding ideas. If you need to change a law, build a bigger coalition first.



# The Official You Know: Set a Meeting

## Reach out at least 2 weeks in advance

1. Send a written request (over email to their official email) and copy their staff person
2. Follow up with a phone call if you don't hear
3. Follow up again

## The message should include:

- Why you want to meet (what's the topic of conversation and quick statement on why it's important to you)
- Who will participate
  - From your group
  - Which staff you'd like to have participate (if any)
- Request a 30-minute meeting by a certain date
  - Specific meeting or vote or planning point as a group
  - If not specific date, suggest by end of month or quarter or the next public meeting

# The Official You Know: Before the Meeting

- Identify one spokesperson from your group
- Identify the specific request you have for the official
  - Needs to be within their role or power for ex:
    - Vote a certain way
    - Host a hearing or educational session
    - Connect with an agency to do something
- Consider any background information, like the data you prepped before, that would be good to bring if the official doesn't know about the topic.
- Be ready to share any updates you've heard from other meetings (but discern what must be shared vs not)

# The Official You Know: The Meeting

- Thank them for the meeting
- Introduce who is in the room
- As we stated in the letter, we want to talk about (topic of conversation)
- It's important because it's impacting our community in the following ways:
  - {list}
  - Someone can share a personal story too
- What we need from the city on your leadership is [specific request]
- Do you have any immediate thoughts on this or questions
  - Can share background information, if they have questions
- Thank you. We'll follow up after [include next public meeting date, etc]

# The Official You Know: Follow Up

- Positive response: After they conduct their action, thank them and let them know you'll keep them in the loop
- Neutral response: Follow up in a week to see if there's any information you can supply or to see if their stance has changed
- Negative response: Thank them for their response and organize your community
  - For example: Have people phone or email about why it matters to them. Attend a public meeting and share public comment. Set up a social media campaign so they can't ignore you.



# The Official You Don't Know: Set a Meeting

## Reach out at least 2 weeks in advance

1. Identify a person or group that supportive of you and is in a good relationship with the official that can get you connected
2. If there isn't anyone, you can say neighborhood group is reaching out. Identify who in your group is a direct constituent of theirs.
3. Send a written request (over email to their official email) and copy their staff person
4. Follow up with a phone call if you don't hear
5. Follow up again

## The message should include:

- Why you want to meet (what's the topic of conversation and quick statement on why it's important to you)
- Who will participate
  - From your group
  - Which staff you'd like to have participate (if any)
- Request a 30-minute meeting by when
  - Specific meeting or vote or planning point as a group
  - If not specific date, suggest by end of month or quarter or the next public meeting
  - If you ask for an hour meeting, they'll likely say no. But it's 30 minutes and it's going well, they're more likely to want to go over

# The Official You Don't Know: Before the Meeting (similar)

- Identify one spokesperson from your group
- Learn more about the official
- Consider any background information that would be good to bring if the official doesn't know about the topic
- Identify the specific request you have for them
  - Needs to be within their role or power
    - Vote a certain way
    - Host a hearing or educational session
    - Connect with an agency to do something

# The Official You Don't Know: Before the Meeting

- Become a nuisance: send emails and phone calls
- If they oppose you: Go public. During a meeting, share how often you've reached out. Write a letter to the editor. Plan to escalate and increase your base by communicating with community members.

# The Official You Don't Know: The Meeting

- Thank them for meeting
- Introduce who is in the room and share business cards
- As we stated in the letter, we want to talk about [topic of conversation].
- It's important because it's impacting our community in the following ways: [list]
- What we need from the city or your leadership is [specific request].
- Do you have immediate thoughts on this or questions?
  - Can share background information, if they have questions
- Thank you. We'll follow up after [include next public meeting date. Etc]





# The Official You Don't Know: Follow Up


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Q & A



# Practice For Our Research Question

- First, let's identify what demand we have: 
- Now, let's go around and practice
  - Name and organization
  - As we stated in the letter, we want to talk about [topic of conversation]
  - It's important because it's impacting our community in the following ways: [list]
  - What we need from the city or your leadership is [specific amount]

# The Media

- Build relationships with local journalists
  - Who are some in your town/surrounding area?
  - Who has written about the issue or impacts caused by the issue?
  - Can you enlarge the area of interest?



# The Media

- When to reach out
  - When you're being ignored by government
  - When you want something investigated
  - If it's a story told often, write a letter to the editor



# The Media

- Follow-up steps after a meeting with officials that you talk to the Media about
  - As we stated, we want to talk about [ topic of conversation].
  - It's important because it's impacting our community in the following ways [list].
  - What we need from the city is [specific request]. Can you [specific request for media]?
  - Do you have any immediate thoughts on this or questions?
  - Thank you.
- Talk to the media ALL the time
  - Need to become their source of information so that they come to you. Show them that you have the expertise.

# The Media

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  - As we stated, we want to talk about [ topic of conversation].
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- Talk to the media ALL the time
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# Q & A and Valuable Resource

<https://waterhub.org/resources/>





# Next Steps for Grant Writing and Evaluation

- Based on the information from the sessions, CNT will draft a proposal by beginning of February and send it to y'all for review, before submitting.
- Please fill out form by January 24th to provide feedback on this series of sessions so we can improve it in the future

**Reflection (Appreciation)**  
**Thank You**