



**Board of Commissioners of Cook County**

**Finance Committee**

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022**

**9:30 AM**

**Virtual Meeting**

**SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA**

[22-3910](#)

**Sponsored by:** DONNA MILLER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRANDON JOHNSON and LARRY SUFFREDIN, Cook County Board of Commissioners

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**COOK COUNTY JUSTICE40 INFRASTRUCTURE FUND INITIATIVE**

**WHEREAS**, infrastructure systems in the United States are in a period of significant disrepair and are increasingly vulnerable due to climate change; and aging infrastructure, new technologies, increasing complexity, and increasing incidents of severe weather due to climate change pose new challenges to the resilience of those infrastructure systems; and

**WHEREAS**, the climate resilience challenge is most severe in disadvantaged communities which are hurt “worst and first” by flooding, extreme heat, extreme cold, and other results of climate change, and these disparities are the result of governmental policies that deliberately institutionalized racial disparities in financing, funding, and delivery of services; and

**WHEREAS**, infrastructure disrepair increases the vulnerability of disadvantaged communities to the impacts of climate change, compounding disparities in health, wealth, and opportunity that afflict communities of color, and particularly Black and African American communities which were specifically targeted by governmental policies that were designed to create and maintain racial disparities; and

**WHEREAS**, eliminating infrastructure disparities resulting from governmental policies of the past requires governmental leadership in the present to make reparative investments specifically targeted to communities that have suffered these harms; and

**WHEREAS**, to build an equitable climate-resilient future for Cook County, reparative climate resilient infrastructure investments are necessary to close the infrastructure gap that has resulted from past policies, and to enable communities that have been subject to disinvestment, underinvestment, and marginalization to fully participate in and benefit from such development; and

**WHEREAS**, failing to make such reparative investments would perpetuate racial disparities by putting new money into old systems that were designed to maintain inequitable outcomes; and

**WHEREAS**, reparative climate resilient infrastructure increases the capacity of communities to respond to and recover from the impacts of climate change, and may include renewable energy, energy storage, residential and commercial building energy efficiency, green infrastructure to mitigate and manage stormwater and heat islands, EV charging infrastructure, and other built infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, experts have determined that predevelopment funding at the local and project levels is the critical gap in accelerating efforts of the Federal Government to support climate-resilient infrastructure systems and regional economies, and to create a steady stream of “shovel worthy” and well-maintained community projects; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County has been a leader in addressing historic and continued disinvestment and inequities that have negatively impacted Black, Latinx and other marginalized residents by advancing equity for all residents in Cook County through policies and investments; and

**WHEREAS**, the foundation for this approach was laid in the Cook County Policy Roadmap, which has guided policy and investment priorities for the county budget, the Equity Fund, CARES Act funding, and American Rescue Plan Funding (ARPA); and

**WHEREAS**, the Cook County Equity Fund Taskforce supports Cook County’s work to intentionally re-align government policies, practices, and resource allocation to advance racial equity and ensure all Cook County residents can live healthy, prosperous lives; and

**WHEREAS**, the County’s Policy Roadmap, Sustainable Communities Pillar, seeks to support healthy, resilient communities that thrive economically, socially, and environmentally and helps inform funding proposals for the Equity Fund and ARPA including by working and investing in environmental justice and sustainability by supporting projects spanning from community solar to comprehensive transit planning; and

**WHEREAS**, the Smart Communities Pillar seeks to provide an innovative infrastructure that will change how we live, work, and connect through investments in transportation and water infrastructure, in addition to increasing access to electric vehicle charging stations throughout Cook County, focusing on where there are currently large gaps in service areas, primarily in the south and west suburbs, and investing in digital equity; and

**WHEREAS**, President Biden made historic commitments to advance environmental justice and spur economic opportunity for disadvantaged communities by establishing the Justice40 Initiative within his first weeks in office; and

**WHEREAS**, the Justice40 Initiative is a whole-of-government effort to ensure that Federal agencies work with states and local communities to make good on President Biden’s promise to deliver at least 40 percent of the overall benefits from Federal investments in climate and clean energy to disadvantaged

communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act created a funding source to advance environmental justice, and spur economic opportunity by investing in reparative climate resilient infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, in order to leverage infrastructure funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to target areas that have experienced historic disinvestment, underinvestment, and marginalization in alignment with the Federal Justice40 Initiative and to ensure such funding is appropriately earmarked and other accounting measures that may be necessary to hold and track the use of such funds are implemented and will work synergistically with the County's equity policies and priorities;

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners, that that the Cook County Budget Director and Comptroller are authorized to create and implement a Special Purpose Fund for reparative climate resilient infrastructure investments in disadvantaged communities in Cook County (the "Cook County Justice40 Infrastructure Fund"), and that 40 percent of Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding received by the County will be earmarked for initiatives therein; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the following agencies will be charged with administering the Cook County Justice40 Infrastructure Fund initiatives and programming: the Bureau of Economic Development, the Cook County Department of Transportation & Highways, the Department of Environment & Sustainability, and other agencies as deemed appropriate; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that eligible entities engaged by the County to provide strategic capacity building resources, technical assistance, flexible pre-development support, construction, and repair and maintenance for climate resilient infrastructure project development grants, funded through the Cook County Justice40 Infrastructure Fund, shall be Minority Business Enterprises which are at least 51 percent owned by one or more Minority Individuals who are economically disadvantaged, or in the case of a publicly owned business, at least 51 percent of all classes of the stock of which is owned by one or more such Minority Individuals; and Minority Led Non-Profit Organizations for which a majority of the governing Board of Directors and executive leadership of the organization are minority persons; that is not dependent on or influenced by another non-eligible person or organization; and that has not been established for the purpose of this legislation; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that eligible entities may apply for grants for pre-development construction costs for reparative climate resilient infrastructure projects located in disadvantaged communities in Cook County such as architectural or engineering work; a market assessment; community outreach and engagement; an economic feasibility study; the acquisition of a site or lease; preparation of a business plan; any activity relating to permitting; any activity relating to the writing of grant applications; capacity building in local community institutions, and nonprofit organizations; and workforce training to execute on such activities; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that eligible entities may apply for grants for construction, repair and

maintenance projects for reparative climate resilient infrastructure projects located in disadvantaged communities in Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Budget Director and Comptroller shall be authorized to transfer Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding into the Cook County Justice40 Infrastructure Fund, and transfer such funding to agencies in charge of administering Cook County Justice40 Infrastructure Fund initiatives and programming; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that the Budget Director and Comptroller shall identify the Cook County Justice40 Infrastructure Fund and associated programming in financial documents such as future Budgets and Annual Appropriation Bills & annual financial reports.

**Legislative History :** 6/16/22 - Board of Commissioners - refer to the Finance Committee