

# FY 2020

## Secretary to the Board of Commissioners

Legislative Agenda Unit

Cook County Historic Archives  
and Records Office (CARO)



Lincoln Living in State

# Mission Statement – Legislative Agenda Unit

To provide legislative support and information for the Cook County and Forest Preserve Boards of Commissioners and their committees, President, elected officials, agencies, departments and members of the public so items can be presented for consideration; also, to provide information regarding the proceedings and policies of the Board so the legislative process will be efficient, effective, open and transparent.

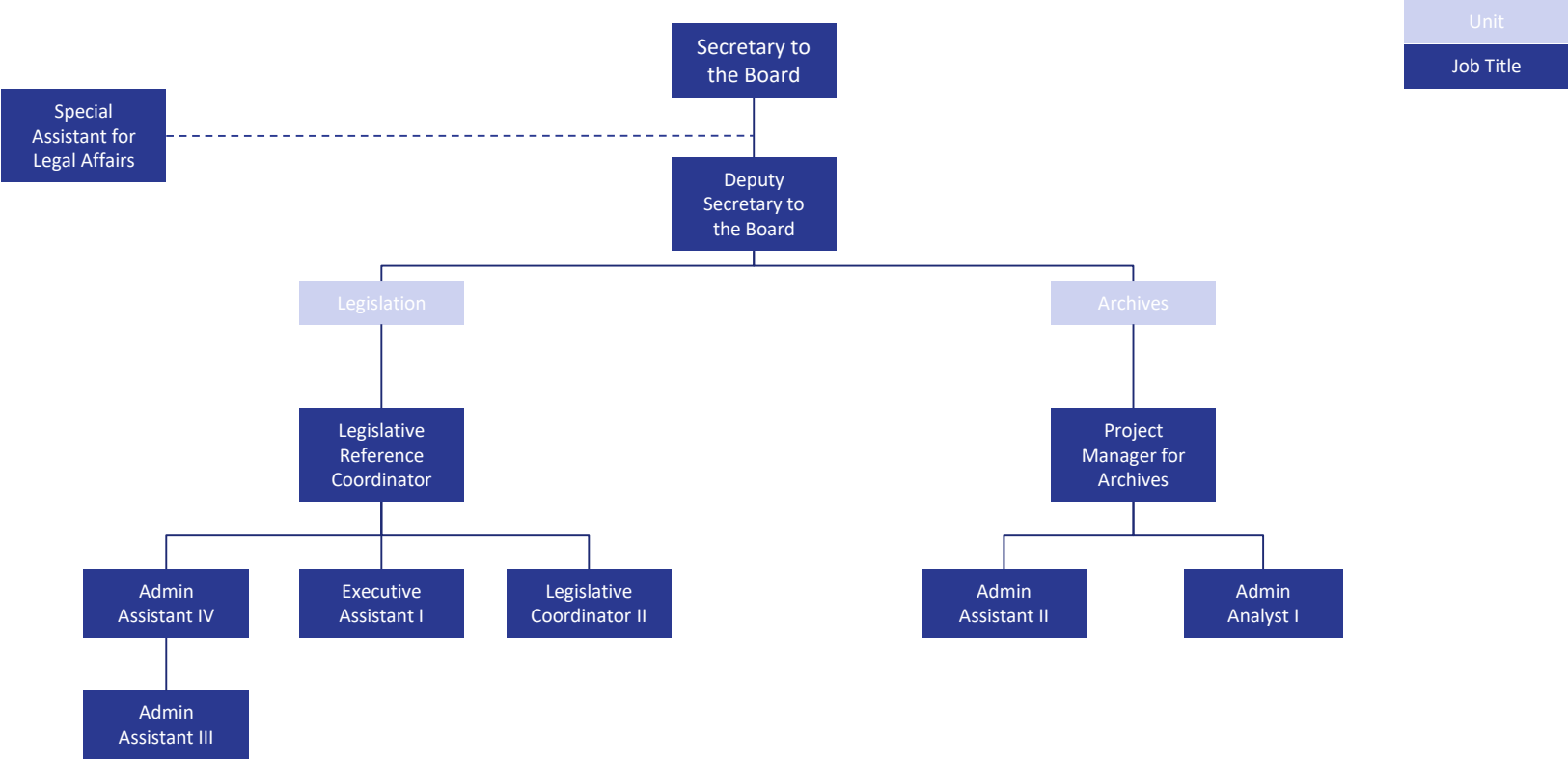
# Mission Statement – The Cook County Historic Archives and Records Office (CARO)

To provide greater knowledge and understanding for County residents and employees of the importance of Cook County's role in the growth and development of the region, state and nation through the documentation and preservation of County documents and artifacts held by County agencies and offices.

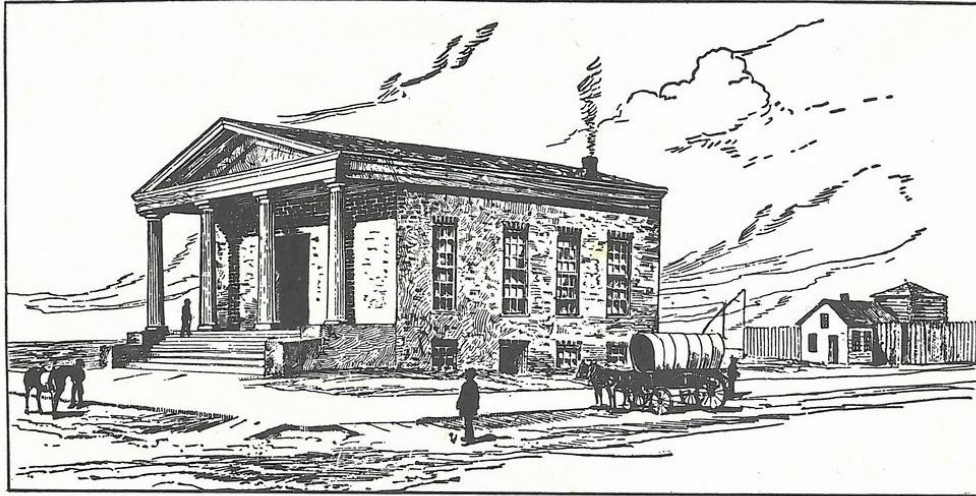
# Current Status Update

- Office of the Secretary to the Board of Commissioners is assigning existing staff and asking approval for a Project Manager to spearhead CARO.
- The Secretary to the Board now has two distinct units: Legislative Unit and CARO.
- There will be no FTE increase to create the office.

# Organizational Chart



# In Preserving County Records for History, Cook County is Behind Almost Every Other County



First Cook county courthouse, erected in 1835, with stockade jail at rear. Not shown in wood engraving is county's first almshouse, built in 1832, which also shared space within the public square. The almshouse promptly became, in effect, County hospital, No. 1.

# Outreach

Determining best practices for  
establishing Cook County  
Archives

- Of the 11 largest counties in the US with central archives, we spoke directly with 8
- We received an additional 5 survey responses from other counties with a population > 1 million

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County	Primary Municipality	Population	Central Archives	Location	Direct Contact
Los Angeles	Los Angeles	10,163,507	Yes	USC Libraries	
Cook	Chicago	5,211,263	No		
Harris	Houston	4,652,980	Yes	County Clerk	Yes
Maricopa	Phoenix	4,307,033	Yes	Administration	Yes
San Diego	San Diego	3,337,685	Yes	History Center	Yes
Orange	Anaheim	3,190,400	Yes	County Clerk-Recorder	Yes
Miami Dade	Miami	2,751,796	Yes	Clerk of Courts	
Kings	New York (Brooklyn)	2,648,771	No		
Dallas	Dallas	2,618,148	No	Dallas Public Archives	
Riverside	Riverside	2,423,266	Yes	Assessor-Clerk-Recorder (ACR)	Yes
Queens	New York (Queens)	2,358,582	No		
Clark	Las Vegas	2,204,079	No		
King	Seattle	2,188,649	Yes	Records and Licensing Services (RALS)	Yes
San Bernardino	San Bernardino	2,157,404	Yes	Assessor-Clerk-Recorder (ACR)	Yes
Tarrant	Fort Worth	2,054,475	Yes	Administration	Yes



# Key Findings (1/2)

## Timeline and Process

- After creation, most archives experienced an initial 10-12 years of development before having a well-established and accessible archives
- Each county emphasized the importance of having a professional archivist oversee the entire cataloging process

## Physical Space

- Key elements of any physical space need to be controlled in order to safely store and preserve documents and artifacts
- Most counties have a research space for public access connected to a main storage facility
- Possible museum space included

## Virtual Space

- Conversion of paper artifacts to documents accessed digitally
- Electronic storage (database)
- Online presence and open public interaction

# Key Findings (2/2)

## Staff Allocation

- Range from 1 to 7 full time employees (FTE)
- Many offices have 1 or 2 part time employees and ALL rely heavily on volunteers
- It would be beneficial to develop connections with local universities and have continuing internship programs for history/library science students

## Funding and Resources

- Staff and real estate are the primary funding considerations
- Counties with extensive digitization rely on IT for high end scanners
- Range of department funding was \$160,000 (Tarrant Co., Texas) to \$1,900,000 (King Co., Washington)

# The Historic Archives and Records Office (CARO)

- Identify—for historic significance—documents, artifacts and materials in County agencies
- Preserve historic items in physical and virtual form, in the most current methodology
- Catalogue historic items so a proper archive inventory is developed
- Provide access to the public for historic items for education and research purposes
- Promote the historic role of County government in public presentations and online
- Coordinate activities and events to promote the County Bicentennial Celebration in 2031.

# Initial Considerations

## Scope

Establish clear goals and scope of how CARO will be used both by the county and the public.

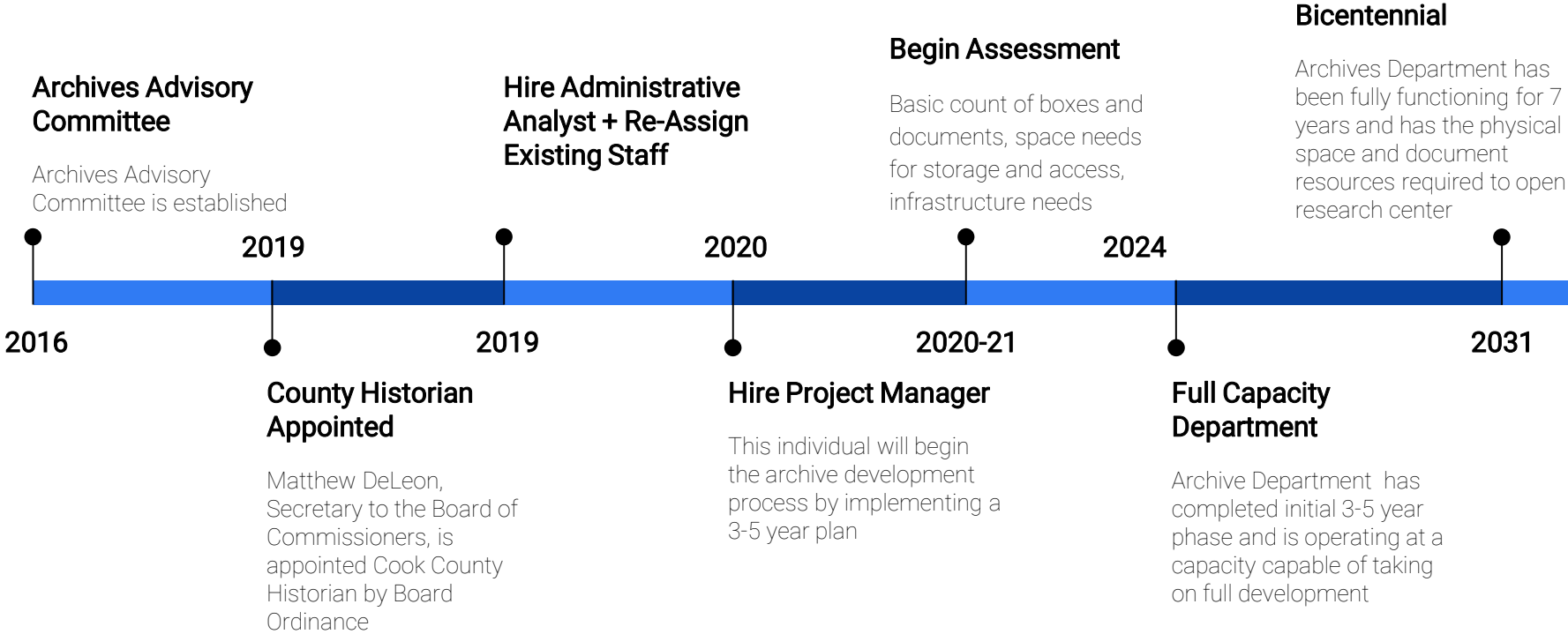
## Personnel

Hire a project manager who is skilled in assessing a project, directing the preliminary steps and managing current documents and artifacts as well as map out a plan for future retention.

## Timeline

Develop 3-5 year plan for hiring, budgeting, and assessment, which will determine long term operations.

# Estimated Extended Timeline



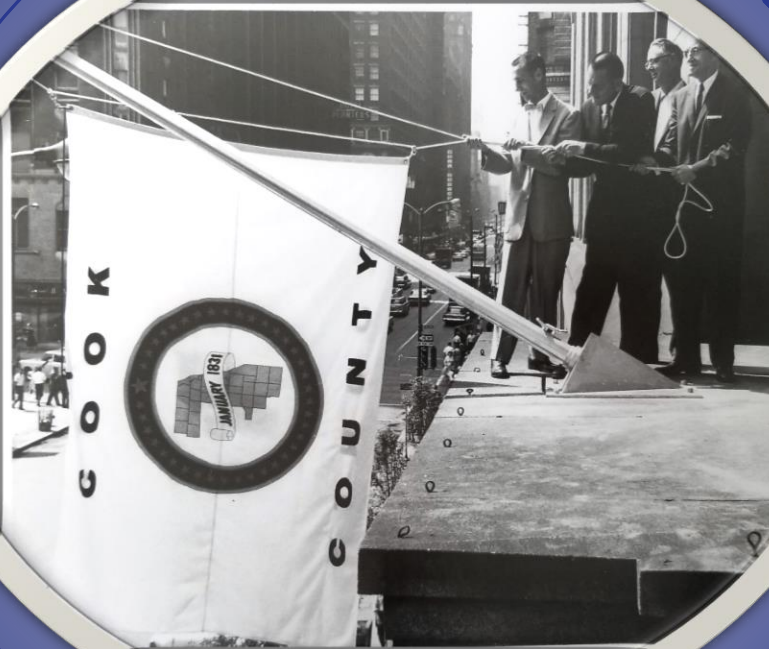
# Initiatives for FY 2020

- Draft County Historic Archives and Records Ordinance
- Cook County Flag Design Contest

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# County Historic Archives and Records Ordinance

- Requires the County Historic Records and Archives Office (CARO) to establish standards to identify documents or artifacts as historic.
- Requires CARO to catalogue the collection of documents and artifacts deemed historic already in its possession.
- Requires CARO to maintain a collection of documents and artifacts deemed historic.
- Requires County Agencies to identify historic documents and artifacts, maintain a physical and virtual collection or request CARO to take possession of their collection
- Requires CARO to document outside collections of County related documents and artifacts held by other institutions.
- Authorizes CARO to accept donated collections from other institutions or individuals.



# New Colors for a New Century

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Cook County Flag  
Redesign Challenge



# Current Design Issues



- Adopted on March 14, 1961
- Designed collectively by the county historian, cartographer, and head of the highway department
- With text, only one side is "correct" when flown
- Center emblem is too intricate and unclear at a distance
- Limited color and symbolism



## County Branding

Increase  
connectivity for  
county wide  
programs,  
projects, and  
initiatives



## Current Design Flaws

With a poor  
design, the  
current flag is  
underused and  
therefore  
unrecognized



## Public Engagement

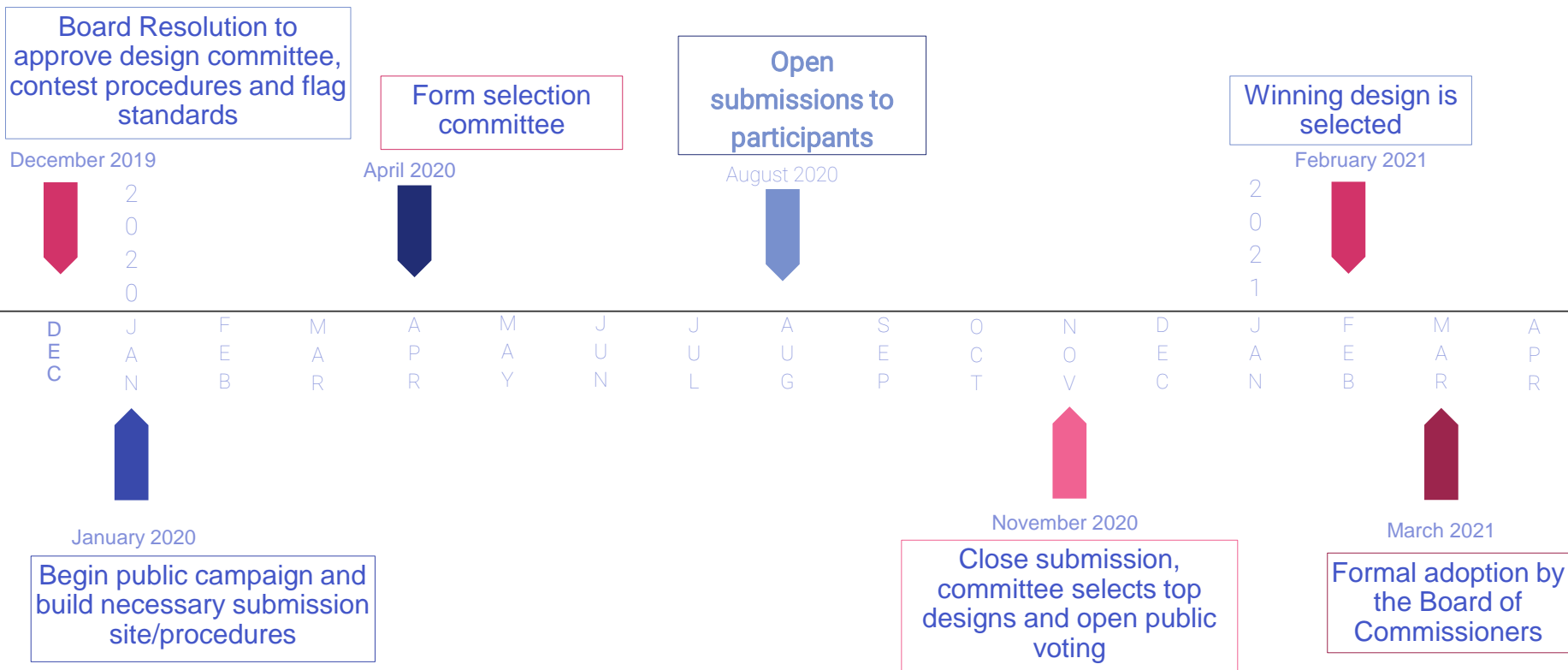
Build a brand  
that is born  
from public  
input and  
engagement

# Call for Redesign

A meaningful flag can help shape  
an identity and increase a cohesive  
sense between all parts of Cook  
County

# Timeline

## Two-year action plan



\*The new design will then be ready for the 190<sup>th</sup> anniversary

# Local School Design Contest

High School juniors will be eligible to submit designs



## Benefits

- Can leverage existing art, design and computer related courses to build designs
- Civic engagement from the youth as well as showcasing young design talent
- Can accept submissions in multiple formats (physical, digital etc.)
- Finalists could be selected based on region
- Ensure representation throughout the county
- Formal recognition for winning designer
- Determine potential public art display opportunities to for runner-up finalists



## Difficulties

- Need to work to ensure schools in all areas of the county are fairly represented
- Excludes potential submissions from community members, even design professionals
- Finalists should be representative of all parts of the county (another element added to judging process)
- Connecting with schools and teachers will take time and personnel



# Considerations

The following are considerations for design process guidelines and the use and selection of a review panel

- **Geography**
  - Forest Preserve, Lake, River, City, and Suburbs
- **County Roles**
  - Health
  - Justice
  - Transportation
- **People**
  - Diverse yet unified
- **Historic Events**
- **Communities/townships**
- **Specific Colors**

# Proposed Design Guidelines

Path to ensure certain key  
elements representative of  
the county are included in  
submissions

# Flag Design Best Practices



## Keep it Simple

Design should be easily drawn from memory



## Meaningful Symbolism

Incorporate symbols and designs that are relevant to the county



## Use 3 or 4 Colors

Design colors should contrast well and come from a standard color set



## No Text or Intricate Designs

Avoid using text and intricate design elements (i.e. Parts of the official seal)



## Distinct yet Related

Do not duplicate other flags but use similarities to show connections





### **Pre-Select Color Palette**

Identify acceptable  
colors and number  
of colors for design  
submission



### **Enforce Restrictions**

Strictly enforce submission size  
and color requirements as week as  
deadlines



### **Unlimited submissions**

Enforcing  
submission limits  
will be costly, and  
largely impossible



### **Clearly stated rules and design rights**

Ensure participants  
understand the transfer of  
the designs to county

# Design Submission Considerations

Ensure the submission  
process is smooth and  
effective



- Include community members and experts from a wide range of design and cultural backgrounds
- Invite professors, teachers, community leaders, artists, and graphic designers
- Ensure members on the committee are selected from all parts of the county
- Potentially allow each commissioner one appointment, giving each district representation
- This panel will be tasked with reviewing the submissions and selecting the top 4 to 6 options to then be put to a public vote
- This ensures only viable and meaningful designs are considered for final selection

# Selection Committee Considerations

Suggestions for selecting and forming expectations for a selection panel