



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 14-4363, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

96 ACRES ARTWORK INSTALLATION AT COOK COUNTY JAIL

WHEREAS, Cook County is a home rule unit of local government pursuant to Article VII, Section 6(a) of the 1970 Illinois Constitution, and as such may exercise any power and perform any function pertaining to its government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, in 1928, construction was started on a new County Jail at 26th and California, next door to the city's House of Corrections and finished by the end of the following year, with the adjoining Criminal Courthouse completed soon after, resulting in the new County Jail and neighboring House of Corrections housing what was then believed to be the largest concentration of prisoners in the free world; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, the Illinois State Legislature voted into law a statute that created the Cook County Department of Corrections (CCDOC), combining the County Jail and the city's House of Corrections under one authority which up to that point performed virtually the same tasks, but run separately for more than 40 years, thus combining staff and inmate populations from both facilities to form one correctional institution; and

WHEREAS, CCDOC, at 96 acres, is one of the largest single site county pre-detention facilities in the United States, covering more than eight city blocks with ten divisions, a health services facility, two education departments, a privatized food service and commissary; and

WHEREAS, 96 Acres is a series of community-engaged, site-responsive projects that involve community stakeholders' ideas about social and restorative justice issues, that examine the impact of incarceration at the Cook County Jail on Chicago's West Side; and

WHEREAS, 96 Acres uses multi-disciplinary practices to explore the social and political implications of incarceration on communities of color, employing creative processes and coalition building to generate alternative narratives reflecting on power and responsibility by presenting insightful and informed collective responses for the transformation of a space that occupies 96 acres but has a much larger social footprint; and

WHEREAS, 96 Acres, funded by the Chicago Community Trust, Special Service Area #25, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Field Foundation of Illinois, is accountable to funders in supporting a diverse range of projects that are impactful, compelling, and engaging to the public; and

WHEREAS, 96 Acres has requested approval to display public art on the north exterior wall of the Cook County Jail, the area surrounding the wall, or another approved space that relates to the jail; and

WHEREAS, 96 Acres has invited cultural workers (artists, organizers, teachers, youth, community groups, etc.) to propose ideas for community engaged public art projects that respect and reveal the diverse perspectives

of those whose lives have been affected by the Cook County Jail; and

WHEREAS, 96 Acres must consider the safety and security of detainees, jail staff and the general public in their proposals by establishing a review committee to ensure that proposed projects will not compromise the security of the CCDOC or the integrity of any structures connected to the facility; and

WHEREAS, such projects may include use of new media/technology, visual art, audio, performance, spoken word, landscape installations, writing, photography, design, print, or other artistic ephemera, with approved projects to be carried out and completed during the fall of 2014; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

1. The foregoing recitals are incorporated herein as findings of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, Illinois;
2. The Board of Commissioners supports the goals of 96 Acres to engage community in exploring the concepts of social and restorative justice issues, and to examine the impact of incarceration at the Cook County Jail on Chicago's West Side; and
3. The Board of Commissioners approves the use of County property for the purpose of installing artwork as approved by a review committee which is to include representatives of the Cook County Sheriff, the Cook County Real Estate Management Division, and the Justice Advisory Council.