Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Details

File #:	22-3910 **Version:** 2	**Name:**	JUSTICE40 INFRASTRUCTURE FUND
Type:	Resolution	**Status:**	Approved
File created:	6/9/2022	**In control:**	Finance Committee
On agenda:	6/16/2022	**Final action:**	11/17/2022

Title: PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION to FILE #22-3910

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, 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 (IIJA) created a funding source to advance environmental justice, and spur economic opportunity by investing in reparative climate resilient infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the most significant legislation in U.S. history to tackle the climate crisis and strengthen American energy security, created an additional funding source that counties can apply for directly including but not limited to a $27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund at EPA, which establishes two different types of grant programs. The first is a $7 billion competitive grant program for state and local governments and other eligible entities, to provide financial and technical assistance to enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy or benefit from zero-emission technologies. The second is a $19.97 billion competitive grant program for state and local governments, among other eligible entities, to either: Provide financial assistance to qualified projects and recycle repayments from fees, interest and repaid loans to maintain the financial assistance program; OR provide financial and technical assistance to create or support public or nonprofit entities which would then provide financial assistance to qualified projects; and

WHEREAS, qualified projects under this second grant program include those that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in partnership with the private sector or through community-led efforts. Additionally, $8 billion of the $19.97 billion is reserved for projects in low-income and disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must begin awarding grants within six months of the IRA's enactment; and

WHEREAS, counties can submit funding requests directly to the EPA for both programs;
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners, that Cook County is committed to advancing health equity and climate justice for disadvantaged communities through the Justice40 Initiative; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Cook County is committed to applying for grants from the IIJA and IRA for the purpose of advancing the principles of the Justice40 Initiative within Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon the award of any IIJA or IRA grants that incorporate the Justice40 principles, the County shall adhere to the provisions in the Cook County Procurement Code (Chapter 34, Article IV) related to the equitable participation of M/WBEs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Budget Director shall report on IIJA or IRA grants received by the County and on ARPA programs that incorporate the Justice40 principles on a quarterly basis.

Sponsors: DONNA MILLER, BRIDGET DEGNEN, BRANDON JOHNSON, LARRY SUFFREDIN, FRANK J. AGUILAR, ALMA E. ANAYA, LUIS ARROYO JR, SCOTT R. BRITTON, JOHN P. DALEY, DENNIS

DEER, BRIDGET GAINER, BILL LOWRY, KEVIN B. MORRISON, PETER N. SILVESTRI, DEBORAH SIMS

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments:

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
11/17/2022	2	Board of Commissioners	approve as substituted	Pass
11/16/2022	2	Finance Committee	recommend for approval as substituted	Pass
10/20/2022	2	Board of Commissioners	defer	Pass
10/19/2022	2	Finance Committee	recommend for approval as substituted	Pass
10/19/2022	1	Finance Committee	accept as substituted	Pass
6/16/2022	1	Board of Commissioners	refer	Pass