

**Towards a Participatory Design:
A Case for Democratic Urban Planning in Chicago Wards**

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By

Juhi Gupta

Preceptor: Sarah Adcock

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Abstract

Can participatory budgeting be used as an effective tool for democracy? Existing literature on participatory budgeting and its use in the United States has focused on its potential to successfully engage communities in the political system and encourage processes of democracy. But, in Chicago, specific implementation problems hinder the use of participatory budgeting as a successful and equitable democratic tool for urban planning. In this study, I analyze qualitative data from interviews with local aldermanic offices and quantitative data about participatory budgeting and TIF spending to discern whether these programs are being used most effectively. I look at how we can use controversial TIFs as a potential funding source for participatory budgeting to best bolster communities' democratic control over their neighborhoods.

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*Towards a Participatory Design:
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Introduction

The city of Chicago has a long history of inequitable urban planning, hearkening back to the days of cronyism that characterized the Daley administration. Chicago suffers from some of the most segregation, urban injustice, and alienation between communities and local government.¹² A 2014 Gallup poll concluded that residents of Illinois had the least trust in their government out of all U.S. states, by far.³ This comes as no surprise when we see how certain communities are systematically deprioritized in urban planning decisions. On the South Side of Chicago, communities have been fighting environmental injustices for decades: petroleum coke from nearby corporate storage facilities polluting the air, former coal plants causing almost 2000 asthma attacks and 26 deaths every year, illegal dumps sanctioned by the local government adjacent to public schools.⁴⁵

¹ Moser, Whet. “Chicago Isn’t Just Segregated, It Basically Invented Modern Segregation.” Chicago magazine. Accessed December 10, 2018.

<http://www.chicagomag.com/city-life/March-2017/Why-Is-Chicago-So-Segregated/>.

² Reeves, Jonathan Grabinsky and Richard V. “The Most American City: Chicago, Race, and Inequality.” Brookings (blog), November 30, 2001.

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2015/12/21/the-most-american-city-chicago-race-and-inequality/>.

³ Inc, Gallup. “Illinois Residents Least Trusting of Their State Government.” Gallup.com. Accessed December 10, 2018.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/168251/illinois-residents-least-trusting-state-government.aspx>.

⁴ Sophie Yeo, “Chicago’s Mexican Immigrants Are Fighting Air Pollution—Again,” CityLab, accessed April 17, 2019,

<https://www.citylab.com/environment/2018/04/why-chicagos-mexican-immigrants-are-fighting-air-pollution/557432/>; “Chicago TIF Projects,” accessed February 4, 2019, <http://chicagotalks.org/TIFstory2011/>

In the past decade, the city of Chicago (like other major cities) has moved towards neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatization, and austerity, to the detriment of constituents.⁶ The shift towards neoliberal urban planning can be seen in the recent popularity of practices like city branding, public-private partnerships (PPPs), and public entrepreneurialism. These practices further deprioritize constituents and their needs, focusing instead on revenue generation and legitimizing the corruption and greed of politicians, shady backroom deals, and unnecessary subsidies to developers. One such example of a neoliberal policy gone awry was the failed Chicago parking meters deal, which outsourced necessary public infrastructure to the private sphere. In 2008, Mayor Richard Daley made a deal with Chicago Parking Meters LLC, a corporation that has since been managing the operation of parking meters across the city.⁷ Chicago Parking Meter LLC reaped \$130 million last year from the city of Chicago, diverting those funds from the public budget and instead filling the pockets of investors. While the company's stakeholders continue to profit from the privatization of what should be a public

⁵ “The City Podcast: How Chicago Residents Battled an Illegal Dump — and the Mob,” accessed April 17, 2019,

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2018/09/24/city-new-podcast-usa-today/1403927002/>

⁶ Tulumello, Simone. “Reconsidering Neoliberal Urban Planning in Times of Crisis: Urban Regeneration Policy in a ‘Dense’ Space in Lisbon.” *Urban Geography* 37, no. 1 (January 2, 2016): 117–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2015.1056605>.

⁷ “Parking Meter Deal Keeps Getting Worse for City as Meter Revenues Rise.”

Chicago Sun-Times (blog). Accessed April 17, 2019.

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/parking-meter-deal-keeps-getting-worse-for-city-as-meter-revenues-rise/>.

good, the city of Chicago suffers from a debt burden of more than \$30 billion – the second worst in the entire country.⁸

These decisions around how the city budget is allocated to public goods have been historically been made behind closed doors, with no input from community members, transparency, or accountability. This is especially dangerous when we think about the severe implications of poor urban planning: there is much extant research in the field of psychology on the impact of the built environment on various attributes of health – physical health predominantly, but also psychological and emotional health. Poorly designed public spaces and neighborhoods are dangerous to the health of civilians who inhabit them. The type and quality of housing, the level of privacy and quietude, and even the placement of physical infrastructure can affect the ways that individuals feel and behave; the design of the built environment can cause feelings of isolation, psychological distress, and poorer cognitive development.⁹ Proactive, pro-social urban design that listens to community needs is necessary for the wellbeing of communities.¹⁰

Local government has attempted to address these problems of inequitable urban planning through a number of avenues. Certain aldermen in the city of Chicago have been engaging constituents in local policy through “participatory

⁸ “Financial State of the Cities Reports.” Accessed December 10, 2018.
<https://www.truthinaccounting.org/news/detail/financial-state-of-the-cities-reports>.

⁹ Evans, Gary W. “The Built Environment and Mental Health.” *Journal of Urban Health : Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 80, no. 4 (December 2003): 536–55.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/jurban/jtg063>.

¹⁰ Guite, H. F., C. Clark, and G. Ackrill. “The Impact of the Physical and Urban Environment on Mental Well-Being.” *Public Health* 120, no. 12 (December 2006): 1117–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2006.10.005>.

budgeting” (PB), a system in which residents have a say in how money is spent on public improvements, such as sidewalks, parks, and public art. This program, operated at the aldermanic level, allows the local residents of each ward to have a stake in decisions about urban planning and the built environment. The program is structured into five phases: idea collection, project development, project expos, community vote, and project implementation and monitoring. Project ideas are solicited from the community, and volunteer community representatives develop these ideas further into project proposals, which then go back to the community at large for a majority vote.¹¹ Through my research, I found that, in the way that the program is currently administered, participatory budgeting suffers from a number of implementation issues that hinder its success, including limitations on funding and a lack of capacity.

Another method that local policy officials have used to fund infrastructure and public resources in the city is through TIFs. Tax increment financing (TIF) is a popular economic development financing tool that the City of Chicago began using in 1984 to “promote public and private investment across the city.”¹² There are 163 TIF districts in the city of Chicago, covering about 1/3 of the city. TIF districts work in the following way: when a TIF district is designated, the city finds the average amount of property tax that the designated area collects. Then, the city freezes property tax revenue at this level. Any additional tax revenue from following years

¹¹ “Participatory budgeting in Chicago,” Participatory Budgeting in Chicago, accessed December 10, 2018, <http://www.pbchicago.org/>

¹² “City of Chicago :: Capital Improvement Program,” accessed April 17, 2019, https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/obm/provdrs/cap_improve.html

is then diverted to a TIF fund that is ostensibly limited to use within the district itself. Property values can increase in TIF districts due to new developments, development on previously vacant lots, additional improvements to already existing properties, or gentrification.¹³ The life of a TIF district is 23 years, after which the freeze on the average property tax is lifted.

TIF funds can pay for improvements to local infrastructure as well as subsidize private development.¹⁴ The City of Chicago has relied “almost exclusively on TIF” to fund infrastructure, finance development, and attract businesses.¹⁵ Since the first TIF was created, they have accumulated over \$5 billion in property taxes.¹⁶ In a given year, the amount of revenue is closer to \$500 million a year. Creating a TIF district is supposed to create a funding pool that can then bolster the economic development of a perhaps forgotten-about area.¹⁷ The intent, as the New York Times wrote in 2011, is to “use these pots of money to lure investment from private

¹³ “Cook County TIFs to Bring in a Record \$1 Billion According to Clerk Orr; Transit TIF Revenue Doubled | Cook County Clerk’s Office,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/news/cook-county-tifs-bring-record-1-billion-according-clerk-orr-transit-tif-revenue-doubled>

¹⁴ derekrobertson2017, “Q&A: What Is a TIF, and Why Is Everyone Talking about It?,” *Medill Reports Chicago* (blog), March 10, 2017, <https://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/qa-what-is-a-tif-and-why-is-everyone-talking-about-it/>

¹⁵ Cecile Carroll, et al., “Democratizing Tax Increment Financing Funds,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://irrpp.uic.edu/pdf/publications/TIF-PB-Toolkit-June-2016.pdf>.

¹⁶ “How Do TIFS Work? – CivicLab,” accessed April 17, 2019, http://www.civiclub.us/tif_illumination_project/how-do-tifs-work/;

¹⁷ “TIFs 101 | Cook County Clerk’s Office,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/service/tifs-101>

real estate investors by fixing infrastructure, acquiring properties for developers, or subsidizing them directly.”¹⁸

However, scholarly literature and popular discourse suggest that the TIF system as it exists today is fundamentally broken, and needs to be rehabilitated if it is to be continued at all. TIFs have been widely criticized as serving as the mayor’s ‘slush fund’ and operating according to a ‘shadow budget.’ Much of the funds raised by TIF districts fall into the hands of private corporations or do not actually go to the blighted districts that the program is supposed to invest in. A lack of bureaucratic oversight and democratic decision-making around the allocation of TIF funds prevent the program from being utilized to its fullest potential.

In this paper, I research the potential of a newly designed participatory budgeting process that is sufficiently funded and institutionalized across the city, one that borrows the benefits of TIFs but takes place at community meetings and town-halls. In order to gain a deeper understanding of what problems TIF and PB are facing, I used quantitative analysis methods to spatially visualize publicly available datasets on both participatory budgeting and TIF spending. I also employed qualitative methods to bolster this understanding, interviewing key practitioners and bureaucrats that steward PB in Chicago and have experience with TIF funding. Through my quantitative and qualitative analysis of participatory budgeting and TIFs, I found that both these programs have implementation

¹⁸ “TIF Aided Public and Private Projects Almost Evenly, Analysis Shows - The New York Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/07/us/07cnctif.html>

problems that prevent them from being used effectively. I conclude with recommendations on how we can adapt the pre-existing methods of community engagement, infrastructure improvement, and economic redevelopment in Chicago to give communities more control over the spaces they inhabit.

Background on participatory budgeting

Participatory budgeting started in Brazil in 1989, in the city of Porto Alegre. After “decades of dictatorship and thin representative democracy” had plagued Brazil’s democracy with issues of rampant inequality, the newly elected Workers Party government introduced participatory budgeting as a new model of democracy that emphasized civic engagement and equity.¹⁹ In Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting redistributed resources to the traditionally under-resourced, serving as an anti-poverty measure. The results were staggering: when participatory budgeting was introduced to Porto Alegre, less than 50% of the population had basic sanitation service. But after eight years of PB, almost 100% of households had water and 85% were served by the sewage system.²⁰

Now, participatory budgeting has spread to over 1,500 municipalities around the world. Chicago was the first city in the United States to implement PB in 2009 under the leadership of Alderman Joe Moore. Moore, “known as a pioneer for

¹⁹ Madeleine Pape and Josh Lerner, "Budgeting for Equity: How Can Participatory Budgeting Advance Equity in the United States," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 12, no. 2 (October 13, 2016): 1, accessed December 4, 2017, <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art9>.

²⁰ Madeleine Pape and Josh Lerner, "Budgeting for Equity: How Can Participatory Budgeting Advance Equity in the United States," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 12, no. 2 (October 13, 2016): 1, accessed December 4, 2017, <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art9>.

political reform, governmental transparency, and democratic governance” brought participatory budgeting to the notably diverse 49th ward of Chicago.²¹ He embraced the program in response to a narrow re-election that caused him to want to re-invest in democracy and his constituency.²²

In the 2012-2013 cycle, participatory budgeting spread to additional wards in Chicago, continuing to develop during the course of the following year. In May of 2014, over 2,800 Chicagoans voted for 15 community projects across the city. The program continues to grow rapidly: the 2016 cycle saw over 3,700 Chicagoans in three wards, one TIF district, and one high school decide how to spend over \$5 million in public dollars.²³ Today, over 13,000 constituents in Chicago have participated in PB, voting on projects ranging from sidewalk repairs to public park improvements.²⁴

PB emerged as a response to issues with bureaucracy and its often inequitable, undemocratic functioning. Bureaucracy often suffers from the issue of impersonal governance, where politicians and bureaucrats making decisions are not in contact with the people who their decisions affect. This disconnect lends itself to

²¹ "About Alderman Joe Moore," Alderman Joe Moore: Chicago's 49th Ward, accessed December 04, 2017, <https://www.ward49.com/about/about-alderman-joe-moore/>.

²² "Chicago: The Elected Official as an Engagement Leader," National League of Cities, 2016, , accessed December 04, 2017, <http://www.nlc.org/chicago-the-elected-official-as-an-engagement-leader>.

²³ Participatory Budgeting Project and Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Participatory Budgeting Chicago Rulebook 2017, PDF, Chicago, 2017, 4.

²⁴ "PB in Chicago," Participatory Budgeting In Chicago, accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.pbchicago.org/pb-in-chicago.html>

decisions that are not in the interest of the governed. These top-down approaches to determining policy and budgetary priorities end up relying heavily on the discretion of individual policymakers, and this discretion has a profound effect on the lives of people that interact with local government on a daily basis.²⁵

PB Chicago attempts to reduce the discretion afforded to these government employees in important budgetary decisions, instead moving to a framework that fulfills residents' self-identified needs. By introducing participatory budgeting, ward residents have a direct pathway to make changes in their community. Instead of moving away from inequitable bureaucracy towards equally inequitable neoliberal new governance policies, PB – at least in theory – offers an alternative: providing each resident with the opportunity to both voice their concerns about their communities and take action.

PB Chicago is a collaborative effort of the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the Participatory Budgeting Profit, and additional technical assistance is provided by Our City, Our Voice. GCI at UIC has been involved in participatory budgeting in Chicago since 2011. After PB began in Chicago in 2009, Participatory Budgeting Project (a national non-profit) and Alderman Joe Moore reached out to GCI for help in expanding PB across Chicago. GCI was useful in this regard because it could serve as a local partner with relationships across the city in Chicago. GCI performed a variety of services to help PB spread across the city, like asset and demographic mapping and data collection.

²⁵ Michael Lipsky, *Street-level bureaucracy: dilemmas of the individual in public services* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983).

GCI offers wards support with implementing participatory budgeting, which can come in the form of research, evaluation, training, technical assistance, staffing, and financial resources, among other things. Sometimes, aldermen or constituents will approach GCI to bring PB to their wards. Other times, GCI reaches out to aldermen who seem like they may be interested in the program. GCI ensures that any candidate running for office knows that PB is available: in December 2018, ahead of the 2019 municipal elections, GCI invited every aldermanic candidate in the city to learn about the program and its utility.

The work that GCI does alongside wards implementing PB is funded through a grant from the McCormick Foundation. GCI gets no support from the city to implement and spread PB; Chicago is the only city in the U.S. that runs PB but does not provide it with any funding. More information on how the participatory budgeting process is facilitated can be found in PB Chicago's comprehensive rulebooks, which are published annually and can be accessed on their website.

Literature Review

Scholarly research around democratic control over local policy mainly focuses on case studies of cities where community engagement was successfully used to make urban planning decisions in an informal, one-off way. This research, however, does not show us clear, institutionalized pathways for us to achieve democratic

control over the built environment, focusing instead on individual city projects and private planning firms including community participation on a case-by-case basis.

Participatory budgeting

There has been some scholarly research on program of participatory budgeting as it has been applied in different cities across the world, but the field of research is relatively unpopulated due to the newness of the program. Most of the literature available is published by the organizations that are involved in promoting and facilitating PB, in cities like Chicago, New York City, and Porto Alegre.

In Brazil's Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting was able to cause large-scale equitable change. One researcher suggests that though participatory budgeting has spread to municipalities across the world, the program has often been "implemented without the broader structural changes that empowered residents and enabled [the process] to be so transformative in Porto Alegre."²⁶ For example, Brazil's participatory budgeting was implemented on a city-wide basis as opposed to a ward-level basis. "The promise of redistributing substantial public funding" was integral to Brazil's implementation PB and the program's success.²⁷

Little to no research has been done on the municipal institutionalization of community-engaged design in the United States through a process like

²⁶ Madeleine Pape and Josh Lerner, "Budgeting for Equity: How Can Participatory Budgeting Advance Equity in the United States," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 12, no. 2 (October 13, 2016): 1, accessed December 4, 2017, <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art9>.

²⁷ Madeleine Pape and Josh Lerner, "Budgeting for Equity: How Can Participatory Budgeting Advance Equity in the United States," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 12, no. 2 (October 13, 2016): 1, accessed December 4, 2017, <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art9>.

participatory budgeting. Using the existing framework of participatory budgeting to accommodate larger-scale projects and funding, ritualize processes of community engagement outside of the framework of local elections, and create infrastructure to support future city-led urban planning efforts has not been explored. Because of how recently the program was adopted in Chicago, there is also not a lot of research that evaluates how successful PB has been as a tool for constituents to revitalize their communities. One example of such research is the two evaluation reports put out by the GCI, which consider data gathered by the program administrators during and after its cycles in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014.

My research seeks to examine the bureaucratic funding structures of participatory budgeting in order to recommend changes that will allow for more democratic decision-making, more creative freedom for residents, and more government efficiency in implementation. I want to research how participatory budgeting can be used as a policy model to systematically include community residents in planning projects that affect their districts and daily lives. This research will likely result in policy recommendations around how the city of Chicago and local aldermen should alter the funding structures of PB to create a streamlined process that is capable of regularly involving citizens in urban planning and making large-scale change.

TIFs

In the past decade, TIFs have garnered widespread criticism for their misuse. There are several issues with the implementation of TIFs in Chicago that critics

have raised over the course of the last decade. Common criticisms in both academic and non-academic literature include the following: for one, although TIF districts were created to spur investment in ‘blighted’ areas, this goal has long since been forgotten.²⁸²⁹ TIF districts were only supposed to be created in areas designated as ‘blighted’ or in danger of becoming ‘blighted,’ as diagnosed by city-hired consultants.

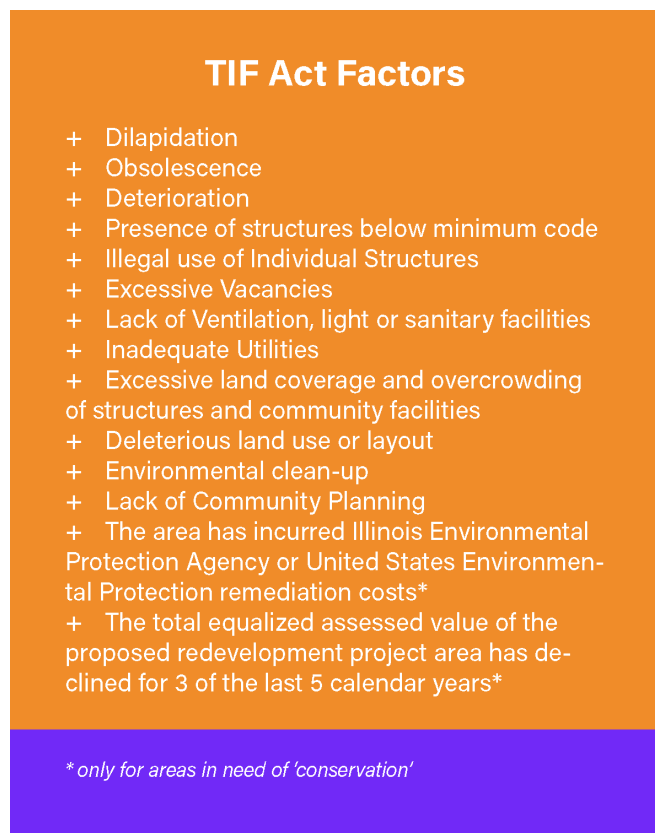


Figure 1

The TIF Act stipulates that a TIF district must be created in an area deemed as either ‘blighted’ or in need of ‘conservation.’ Another stipulation, referred to casually as the ‘but for’ rule, was that TIF districts should only be created in areas that would not receive private investment ‘but for’ TIF money, aka public subsidies.³⁰

The TIF Act provides some clarification on what it takes for an area to qualify as ‘blighted’ or in need

²⁸ “TIF Subsidies Given to Chicago Companies, Nonprofits Bypass City Neighborhoods in Need of Jobs – ChicagoTalks,” accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.chicagotalks.org/?p=11741>

²⁹ Greg LeRoy, “TIF, Greenfields, and Sprawl: How an Incentive Created to Alleviate Slums Has Come to Subsidize Upscale Malls and New Urbanist Developments,” *Planning & Environmental Law* 60, no. 2 (February 1, 2008): 3–11, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15480750802202991>.

³⁰ WBEZ, *Curious City: Untangling TIFs with Sharpies*, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmx4ryRc2Gc>

of ‘conservation’ (essentially the precursor to becoming blighted). In a ‘blighted’ area, five of the list of factors in Figure 1 must be “present to a meaningful extent and reasonably distributed through out a proposed TIF district so that reasonable persons will conclude that public intervention is necessary.” In an area in need of ‘conservation’ 50% or more of the structures in the designated area must be 35 years old or more, and three of the factors in Figure 1 must be present.³¹

Scholarly research argues that these stipulations are poorly enforced and up to the discretion of the city, allowing policymakers to easily sidestep the rules. Alderman Leslie Hairston of the 5th ward wrote in an Illinois State Bar Association newsletter in 2008 that “there appear to be several ways in which the City of Chicago, in its practical utilization of TIF, is failing to adhere to this fundamental purpose for the program and actually may be undermining potential economic development in Chicago’s poorest neighborhoods.”³² The focus on ‘blighted’ neighborhoods has been largely ignored by mayors – TIF money is used across the city, not just in the district it came from, and TIF districts are not present in traditionally underprivileged areas of Chicago. Critics often point to the fact that much of TIF revenue is redirected to areas that are in or near downtown – areas that don’t need to spur development – instead of areas that are actually

³¹ “65 ILCS 5/ Illinois Municipal Code.,” accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=006500050HArt%2E+11+Div%2E+74%2E4&ActID=802&ChapterID=14&SeqStart=210000000&SeqEnd=212200000>

³² “An Overview of TIF Districts | Illinois State Bar Association,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.isba.org/committees/women/newsletter/2008/10/anoverviewoftifdistricts>

economically distressed. Between 2002 and 2008, when the TIF district expired, about \$430 million was spent in the Central Loop TIF district alone.³³ A study from Columbia College in Chicago found that about half of the TIF deals made with companies from 2000 through 2011 were clustered around the Loop.³⁴

Critics argue that areas that actually need additional revenue – such as the South and West sides of Chicago – are not favored by TIFs. “In truly blighted areas, it’s very hard for TIF to jump-start development,” said Rachel Weber, University of Illinois at Chicago professor and TIF panel member.³⁵ This is because TIFs rely on some developer interest to begin with, as well as a trend of rising property taxes. The same study mentioned above found that economically disadvantaged black neighborhoods – such as Englewood (median income \$19,000), West Garfield Park (\$23,000), and North Lawndale (\$18,000) – received very little TIF money.³⁶

Mayor Rahm Emanuel is seeking to create several new TIF districts this year before he is replaced by incoming Mayor Lori Lightfoot, including one along the Chicago River between Lincoln Park and Bucktown. In this proposed district, TIF money would subsidize developer Sterling Bay’s infrastructure costs for a new development called Lincoln Yards. This infamous development has come under fire

³³ “Corporate Giants Received TIF Money, Records Show - The New York Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/us/27cnctif.html>

³⁴ Thomas Cafcas, “Shining A Light On \$1.2 Billion In Chicago TIFs,” March 3, 2011, <https://clawback.org/2011/03/03/shining-a-light-on-1-2-billion-in-chicago-tifs/>

³⁵ “Corporate Giants Received TIF Money, Records Show - The New York Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/us/27cnctif.html>

³⁶ Thomas Cafcas, “Shining A Light On \$1.2 Billion In Chicago TIFs,” March 3, 2011, <https://clawback.org/2011/03/03/shining-a-light-on-1-2-billion-in-chicago-tifs/>

in the media recently: critics argue that this district is not a blighted area, and development would happen there regardless of giant government subsidies.³⁷

Public and scholarly discourse around TIFs takes issue with the fact that a substantial proportion of TIF funds pads the pockets of wealthy executives. This was common under former Mayor Richard M. Daley, who was criticized extensively for his agenda-driven championing of TIFs. Many saw TIFs as a “slush fund for [the mayor] to subsidize corporate Chicago at the public’s expense.”³⁸³⁹ Supporting this contention, the Chicago News Co-op found in 2011 that as much as half of all TIF revenue collected between 2002 and 2010 went to private corporations.⁴⁰ Examples of these corporations are United Airlines and Quaker Oats, who have received at least \$30 million, and \$13 million, respectively.⁴¹⁴² Major retail chains such as Target, Home Depot, and Jewel Osco also reap much of the TIF benefits. TIFs are used to entice businesses to move to the city or prevent them from leaving. In 2015,

³⁷ “Plan To Limit Chicago TIF Districts Likely To Be Voted Down By Emanuel Allies – CBS Chicago,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2018/12/11/new-tif-district-rules-voted-down-rahm-emanuel-allies-city-council-finance-committee/>

³⁸ “Corporate Giants Received TIF Money, Records Show - The New York Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/us/27cnctif.html>

³⁹ “SAMPLES,” Chicago Is Not Broke!, accessed April 17, 2019, <http://wearenotbroke.org/samples.html>

⁴⁰ “TIF Aided Public and Private Projects Almost Evenly, Analysis Shows - The New York Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/07/us/07cnctif.html>

⁴¹ “Corporate Giants Received TIF Money, Records Show - The New York Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/27/us/27cnctif.html>

⁴² “How Do TIFS Work? – CivicLab,” accessed April 17, 2019, http://www.civiclub.us/tif_illumination_project/how-do-tifs-work/

Rahm Emanuel used TIF funds to build a new basketball stadium at DePaul University, to widespread public criticism.⁴³

Mayor Daley was able to dole out giant sums to corporations because, structurally speaking, the dispersal of TIF money is under control of the mayor and city council.⁴⁴ In addition, it is difficult to gain access to comprehensive information about TIFs. Before the study done by Columbia College, Chicago TIF projects were poorly indexed. Many journalists had to use FOIA (the Freedom of Information Act) to get local government officials to release TIF documents, as they initially claimed they were too hard to find.⁴⁵

Another problem that people raise about TIFs is that TIF developments do not always provide affordable housing. In 2006, the city authorized \$8.5 million in TIF money to renovate the former Florsheim Shoe Factory before selling to developers. In return, developers said that 20% of its units would be allocated for affordable housing (at or below 100% of the area's median income). Community advocates argued that this was not a responsible use of public funds. John McDermott, Director of Housing and Land Use for the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, says he and the association were troubled by the meager amount of

⁴³ "TIF Subsidies Given to Chicago Companies, Nonprofits Bypass City Neighborhoods in Need of Jobs – ChicagoTalks," accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.chicagotalks.org/?p=11741>

⁴⁴ WBEZ, *Curious City: Untangling TIFs with Sharpies*, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmx4ryRc2Gc>

⁴⁵ "FOIA Request To Find \$1.7 Billion In TIF Funds," *The TIF Illumination Project* (blog), September 11, 2014, <http://www.tifreports.com/2014/09/11/foia-request/>

affordable housing built as a result of this and similar deals.⁴⁶ Given the extent to which TIF money was financing the development, they expected more affordable housing to be built.

Perhaps the largest complaint that people have about TIF is the following: despite TIF funds running high, public service budgets are cut under the guise of austerity. The city and county, and the public services they provide, are funded by property taxes. These public services include the police department, firefighters, public schools, public transit, libraries, and parks, among others. CPS, for example, counts on property taxes to fund 37% of their budget.⁴⁷ But after a TIF district property tax freeze, they can't rely on the increase of this funding source. As a result, budget cuts, class-size increases, and teacher firings are inevitable, even when these things could be prevented if TIF money was allocated to CPS.⁴⁸ This happened under Mayor Daley: he claimed that CPS had a \$1 billion deficit and then proceeded to make budget cuts, eliminating more than 1300 teachers in 2010. Parents of CPS students rallied against this inefficient use of TIFs and the ensuing dilapidation of the public school system. They argued that, if TIF money had been available to CPS, these cuts wouldn't have been necessary.

⁴⁶ "TIF Subsidies Given to Chicago Companies, Nonprofits Bypass City Neighborhoods in Need of Jobs – ChicagoTalks," accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.chicagotalks.org/?p=11741>

⁴⁷ "Chicago TIF Money, Records Show given to Corporate Giants," Daily Kos, accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/3/6/953394/>

⁴⁸ "The Armies Are Gathering | Politics | Chicago Reader," accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/tifs-chicago-public-schools-cps-school-funding/Content?oid=1984315>

For the past two years, several members of the City Council Progressive Caucus have been pushing the “TIF Back to Basics” ordinance. This ordinance would limit the use of TIF funds, requiring that TIF money only go to projects that cannot be completed without it. This ordinance would also reintroduce the ‘blighted’ requirement for TIF districts, and properties involved would have to be vacant or obsolete.⁴⁹ In December 2018, the City Council Finance Committee stalled a vote on this ordinance. Despite Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s rhetoric of fixing the TIF system, his allies on the committee were expected to side with corporations and developers and vote against the ordinance. Several candidates in the 2019 aldermanic race ran on a platform endorsing this topical and still-relevant Back to Basics ordinance.

The way that TIFs are currently administered leads to cronyism and patronage. But if implemented alongside community engagement programs, TIF could be seen as a tool for neighborhood revitalization. TIF money could be put towards affordable housing developments, park and school improvements, public art and beautification projects, and more. Several aldermen and community organizations have visions for where TIF money should be redirected: expanding city-wide recycling programs, creating more affordable housing, and funding public schools, among others.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ “Plan To Limit Chicago TIF Districts Likely To Be Voted Down By Emanuel Allies – CBS Chicago,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2018/12/11/new-tif-district-rules-voted-down-rahm-emanuel-allies-city-council-finance-committee/>

⁵⁰ “The Armies Are Gathering | Politics | Chicago Reader,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/tifs-chicago-public-schools-cps-school-funding/Content?oid=1984315>

Scholars, politicians, and ordinary constituents all generally agree that there are problems with the ways that TIFs are used in Chicago today. In the 2019 mayoral election, all 16 candidates proposed ways to alter TIF administration and usage.⁵¹ The existing debate in scholarly literature around TIFs centers around the following question: should those who are concerned with equitable and just community investment oppose TIFs because they are structured in an inherently inequitable way, or can we harness the power of TIFs and repurpose them to better serve residents? Blocks Together, a community organization in Chicago's West Humboldt Park, has long fought for public spending that prioritizes "a demonstrated direct benefit for current community members, transparency in funding allocation and application processes, and spatial equity, where communities with the greatest needs receive more funds than those with fewer pressing needs."⁵² I believe that a public spending of this nature is possible without abolishing TIFs. In this paper, I will argue that there is a way to alter the current structure of TIFs to better serve our communities, better than abolishing them completely.

PB and TIFs

⁵¹ "Where 16 Chicago Mayoral Candidates Stand on TIFs: Their Full Responses | Chicago Sun-Times," accessed April 17, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/where-16-chicago-mayoral-candidates-stand-on-tifs-their-full-responses/>

⁵² Cecile Carroll, et al., "Democratizing Tax Increment Financing Funds," accessed April 17, 2019, <https://irrpp.uic.edu/pdf/publications/TIF-PB-Toolkit-June-2016.pdf>

There is one paper and toolkit published by Thea Crum and others at the GCI that talks about redistributing TIF funds into the participatory budgeting process.⁵³ This toolkit is divided into three sections: the first includes background information on the mechanics of TIF and PB, in Chicago and in other U.S. cities. The second is a case study of one community organization in Chicago that was able to effectively gain access to TIF funds to advance their own community-focused agenda, which they did through the use of PB. The third contains more generalized advice on how community residents can have a hand in determining the city's spending priorities. This section advises readers to perform popular education, capacity building training, and technical assistance to inform constituents that they are legally able to develop project proposals and apply for them to be funded by TIFs. It also advises readers to organize for participatory budgeting in their wards, to gain access to discretionary funds like menu money or TIFs. Figure 2 on the next page shows an excerpt from the toolkit, which informs readers on eligible TIF uses in Illinois and possible demands for community members.

Although the toolkit fairly comprehensively lays out the latent problems of the TIF program, it doesn't provide a framework for institutionalizing equity through TIFs. Rather, it focuses on tactics that individual community members can use to pressure local decision-makers to use TIF funds as they stand to benefit the community: these tactics include instituting advisory councils, fight for community benefits agreements, among other things. It also advises community leaders to

⁵³ Cecile Carroll, et al., "Democratizing Tax Increment Financing Funds," accessed April 17, 2019, <https://irpp.uic.edu/pdf/publications/TIF-PB-Toolkit-June-2016.pdf>

inform residents that they can apply for TIF funds. The toolkit does not talk about how the bureaucratic structure of TIF can be altered from within to improve communities across the city.

Eligible TIF uses in Illinois	Examples of possible community demands for TIF funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies, administration, and professional service • Property acquisition, demolition, site preparation, and environmental site improvements • Rehabilitation, construction, repair, and remodeling of existing buildings • Construction of public works and improvements • Job training implemented by businesses located in the redevelopment project area • Financing • Approved capital costs of the overlapping taxing district • Relocation • Paying in lieu of taxes • Reimbursing school districts for increased costs caused by TIF-assisted housing developments • Job training for advanced vocational or career education incurred by other taxing bodies • Construction of new housing units for low income and very low income households 	<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the character of streetscape improvements supports a community vision • That public improvements genuinely improve the area at large • That there is reinvestment in street lighting and sidewalks <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That a certain number of housing units be affordable • That the terms of affordability meet the incomes of community residents • Workforce development • That a percentage of revenue in commercial TIF districts be dedicated to job training <p>Open Space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That a certain amount of green or open space is created or preserved with a new development • That there is reinvestment in neighborhood parks <p>Commercial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That retail development serves community needs and addresses residents' budget constraints <p>Industrial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That TIF funds be used for public improvements and job training <p>Source: http://tiger.uic.edu/cuppa/gci/cs/tif/leverage/model.html Please note: These are some examples of possible community demands or needs and not an exhaustive list.</p>

Figure 2

In the specific case of Blocks Together, the community organization featured in the case study, the TIF funds that were made available to the community to be dispensed according to PB were only in use because of the following context: when community members learned of a new development in their ward, they pressured their local alderman to get the developer to sign a community benefits agreement (CBA). When the developer refused to sign this CBA, the proposed housing project fell through and the \$2 million in TIF funds that was initially allocated to the housing project was left unspent. This was a unique situation in which communities gained access to TIF funds, but this kind of access is not institutionally provided.

My research focuses on how we can operationalize community access to TIF funds across the city – not just when extenuating circumstances prevail.

Methods

In order to examine how to transform participatory budgeting into a more effective civic engagement tactic, I employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Quantitative

Due to the relative newness of the program, participatory budgeting in Chicago does not have much accessible, public data. However, one resource the PB Chicago website provides is a dataset on what projects were proposed in participatory budgeting cycles across the city from 2010 to 2017. Many project proposals in this dataset are missing location and categorization data; the dataset is not formatted well for analysis. In order to run spatial analysis and data visualization techniques on this dataset, I went through each project listing to ensure that each had a standardized category value. The predetermined standardized categories that PB Chicago used to differentiate project themes were the following: Arts and Culture, Biking and Transit, Libraries and Schools, Parks and Environment, and Streets and Sidewalks. Upwards of 60 projects were not assigned to a standardized category. In order to conduct an accurate analysis of the data, I reviewed these uncategorized project proposals individually and assigned them to one of the aforementioned standardized categories.

Additionally, I filled in address information where missing for each project proposal. Where a single project proposal included enhancements in several places in the ward, or a working address could not be found, I used the address of the ward's aldermanic office as a fill-in. I analyzed the dataset using the software application Tableau Public; this application requires latitude and longitude data in order to spatialize the dataset. In order to obtain this, I geocoded the data with a free online public app called Alteryx.

Next, I wanted to research how much money would be allocated through PB per capita, if the aldermen in every ward devoted their menu money to the program. In order to calculate the allocation of public funds per capita in Chicago wards, I used a public dataset provided by Chicago Data Guy that pulls from block populations tallied in the decennial U.S. Census Bureau, as well as "block group" estimates published by the U.S. Census Bureau in the interim. I used this to determine how equitably menu money is distributed in wards that use participatory budgeting.

In addition to looking at the meager data around participatory budgeting, I analyzed TIF data. In contrast to data for participatory budgeting, TIF data is ubiquitous. The City of Chicago runs a TIF portal accessible from the city's website, featuring an interactive map with detailed information on TIF districts and implemented projects. Such information ranges in detail: for example, in Hyde Park, we can see that the developer Antheus Capital was subsidized \$11 million by the city to build the mixed-use retail and residential development City Hyde Park.

Smart Hotels/Olympia Chicago was subsidized almost \$3 million to construct Hyatt Place Chicago at Hyde Park, and Harper Court Partners LLC/Vermillion Development was subsidized \$20 million to redevelop Harper Court.

However, the City's TIF portal does not allow for spatial analysis of the data: the portal only allows users to search by TIF district, by project, by ward, and by address. To supplement this data, I analyzed a TIF Project Tracker dataset from the City of Chicago. This is likely the dataset that the City uses to update its TIF Portal map, and it was updated as recently as April 11, 2019. In order to see the distribution of TIF projects that were not completed by the city, I manually excluded entries that named one of the following as a developer: Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, and Chicago Transit Authority. In order to compare the distribution of these TIF projects in neighborhoods across the city to data on those neighborhoods' median income, I used the online interactive map Rich Blocks Poor Blocks. This map uses median household income data from the 2012-2016 American Community Survey.

Another source of data on TIFs that I analyzed was a dataset on projected TIF district programming for 2018 through the planned expiration of each TIF district. This dataset includes estimated fund and project balances through the end of fiscal year 2017. The dataset provides information on known financial obligations and proposed TIF district projects, as well as projected estimates of revenue from existing TIF districts. I analyzed this data to see which TIF districts were projected to be generating the most revenue over the next decade. I also analyzed a document

from the Office of the Cook County Clerk outlining a revenue comparison across all TIF districts from 2016 to 2017. This document was in PDF form and not formatted correctly for quantitative analysis or data visualization. In order to examine this data in a meaningful way, I manually formatted the PDF into an Excel file that could be imported to Tableau Public.

I also looked at the data on existing TIF districts in Chicago from the TIF Status and Eligibility dataset, obtained from the City of Chicago data portal. This dataset has information on the status (active, expired, or terminated) of all TIF districts. I suspect this dataset has not been updated since 2010, as TIF districts that expired between 2010 and the present still register on the dataset as active. However, the dataset has valuable information on whether each TIF district is formally considered 'blighted' or in need of 'conservation,' which I intend to look at in order to gauge the accuracy of this public reporting.

The datasets that I used are outlined in Figure 3 below. Given the technical nature of many of these files, I have assigned a clearer name to each dataset; I will use this name to reference the corresponding dataset in later sections.

Figure 3

Source	Given name	Name of dataset	Link
PB Chicago	PB 2010-2017 Project Tracker	Chicago_PBBallot_Project Tracker_v1	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1g8cdHqtDMJ2iF89KxZgPa2Y4lvFHZ_8h9

			w- BYDntunI/edit#gid=155260 6893
City of Chicago	Projected TIF revenue	TIF District Programming - 2018-2022	https://data.cityofchicago.org/Community-Economic-Development/TIF-District-Programming-2018-2022/4kht-kuvx/data
City of Chicago	TIF Portal	TIF Portal	https://webapps1.cityofchicago.org/ChicagoTif/
Office of the Cook County Clerk	TIF 2016-2017 Revenue Comparison	TIF District Summary - City of Chicago Only 2016 to 2017 Revenue Comparison	https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/w.%202017%20Chicago%20TIF%20Summary.pdf
City of Chicago	TIF Status and Eligibility	TIF Status and Eligibility	https://catalog.data.gov/dataset/tif-status-and-eligibility-d578b
Chicago Data Guy on Blogspot	Estimated Ward Populations	Estimated Ward Populations	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1sxM-JajdrC7R1VZ_sHjUwkTQ0qs2z7a7jFbCbITii3Q/edit#gid=1503084939
City of Chicago	TIF Project Tracker	Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Projects	https://data.cityofchicago.org/Community-Economic-

			Development/Tax- Increment-Financing-TIF- Projects/mex4-ppfc
Chris Persaud	Rich Blocks Poor Blocks	Rich Blocks Poor Blocks	https://richblockspoorblocks.com

Qualitative

In order to gain a qualitative analysis of the issues affecting the administration of participatory budgeting across the city, I also interviewed three experts: Jessica Alvarez, the Chief of Staff at the office of Alderman Carlos Rosa of the 31st ward; Thea Crum, the Director of the Neighborhoods Initiative at the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago; and Alderman Joe Moore of the 49th ward, the first ward to bring participatory budgeting to the United States. I chose these interviewees due to their specific roles in the implementation of participatory budgeting: as an aldermanic staffer, Alvarez oversees the implementation of participatory budgeting in the 31st ward, a model ward for the program. Crum oversees participatory budgeting programs in all engaged wards through her role at GCI, and she also oversees several other community planning projects across the city. Moore was the very first person to introduce participatory budgeting to a community in the United States, and has been an active proponent of the program since its adoption in 2010.

Interview Questions

- + What is your role in administering PB?
- + What issues have you run into with administering PB in Chicago?
- + If you could, how would you change the way that PB is currently implemented?
- + Why do some wards and aldermen stop using PB?
- + In your experience, why do people like PB?
- + What do people generally use PB to achieve?
- + In what ways would you consider PB a success?
- + What has been your experience with TIF funding?
- + In your experience, how have you seen PB and TIFs used together?

Figure 4

In addition to interviewing them about participatory budgeting, I spoke with my interviewees about TIF funds and how these funds can or do overlap, bolster, hinder, or otherwise

interrelate with participatory budgeting processes. I began with the list of general interview questions above in Figure 4, including additional questions for each interviewee tailored to their role.

I also examined primary source material that I received from Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa of the 35th ward: this included the 2019 Neighborhood Infrastructure Menu Program from the Office of Mayor Rahm Emanuel and a report published by the office of Ramirez-Rosa in July of 2018 called “Progress and People Power in the 35th ward (2015-2018).” This primary source material had more specific and up-to-date information about menu money in Chicago and community improvements and programs in the 35th ward, respectively.

Results + Analysis

Quantitative

I. Participatory budgeting

Mapping the data from the PB 2010-2017 Project Tracker showed that the project proposals were geographically distributed as shown in Figure 5. Note that the map includes both projects that were funded and those that were not funded. The map highlights funded projects with a red dot, and unfunded projects with an orange dot. The few projects that were not listed as funded or unfunded appear as a blue dot.

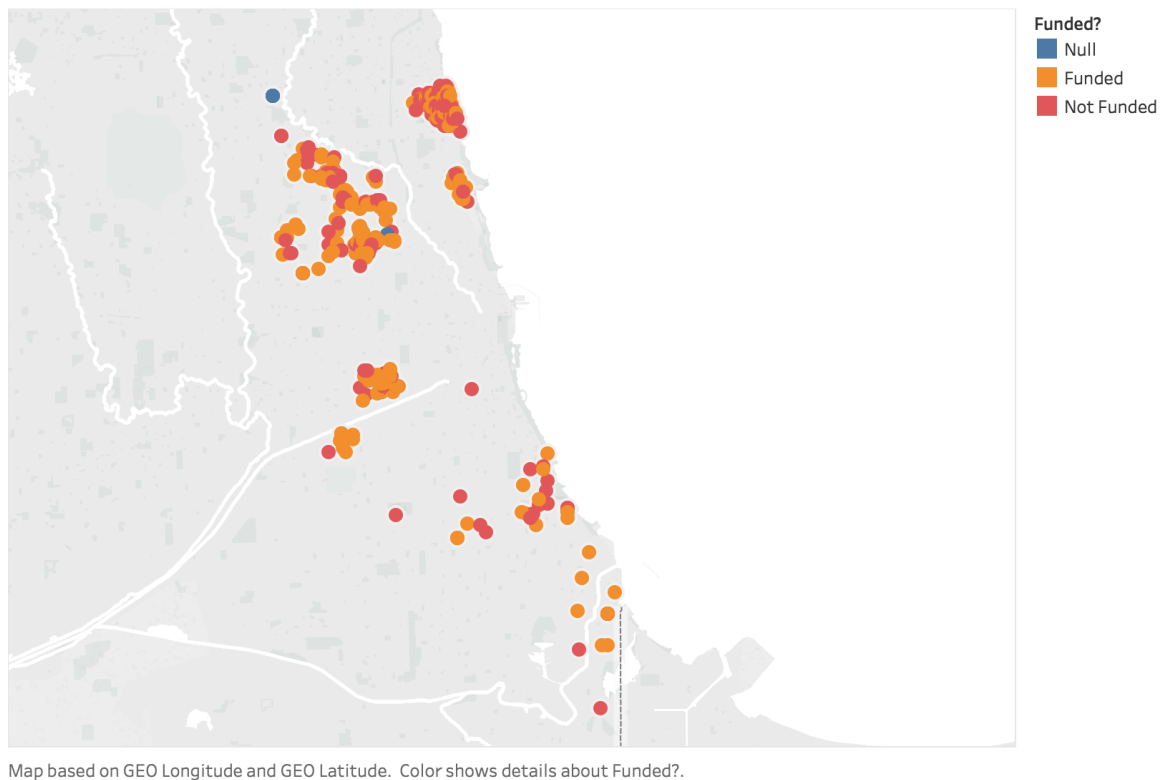


Figure 5

From this map, we can see that participatory budgeting is popular in areas relatively far from downtown. Project proposals cluster around the following zipcodes: 60626, 60630, 60639, 60623, and 60637. PB seems to have spread to

adjacent wards that circle a few-mile radius around the Loop, but the program has not spread to anywhere near the commercial downtown area itself.

We can also see from the PB 2010-2017 Project Tracker data that, though most of the project proposals (55.5% of the 551 project proposals) were funded, almost half did not receive funding. Sometimes, project proposals are dropped from consideration by CDOT due to “various conflicts or constraints.”⁵⁴ More often, however, project proposals are rejected due to the limited funds that the PB process in each ward has access to.

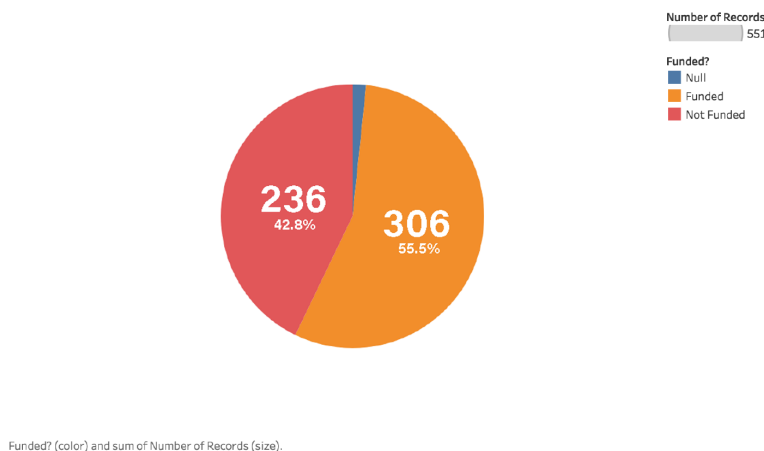


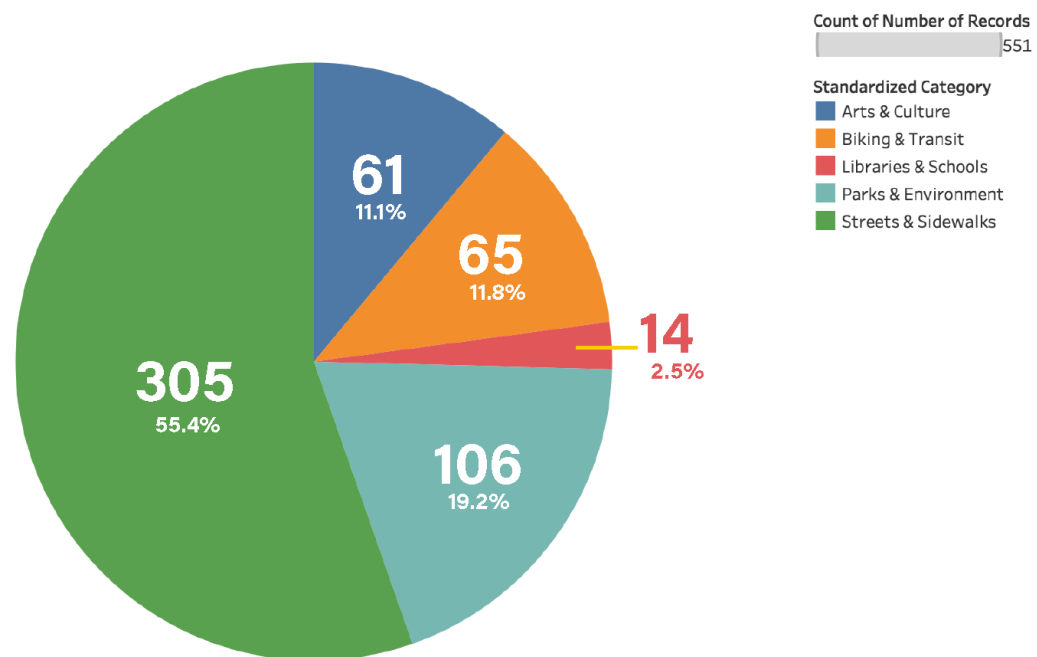
Figure 6

With respect to the categorization of project proposals, the PB 2010-2017 Project Tracker shows some key takeaways, visualized in Figure 7:

- The most frequent project proposals, by far, were those categorized as “Streets & Sidewalks.” 55.4% of all project proposals submitted from 2010-2017 were centered around fixing or improving streets and sidewalks.

⁵⁴ <http://chicago47.org/wp-content/uploads/2018-Menu-Summary.pdf>

- 19.2% of the proposals were devoted to Parks & Environment, and 11.1% and 11.8%, respectively, were devoted to Arts & Culture and Biking & Transit.
- The most infrequent project proposals were those categorized as “Libraries & Schools.” This is likely due to libraries and schools receiving additional funding from the city budget.



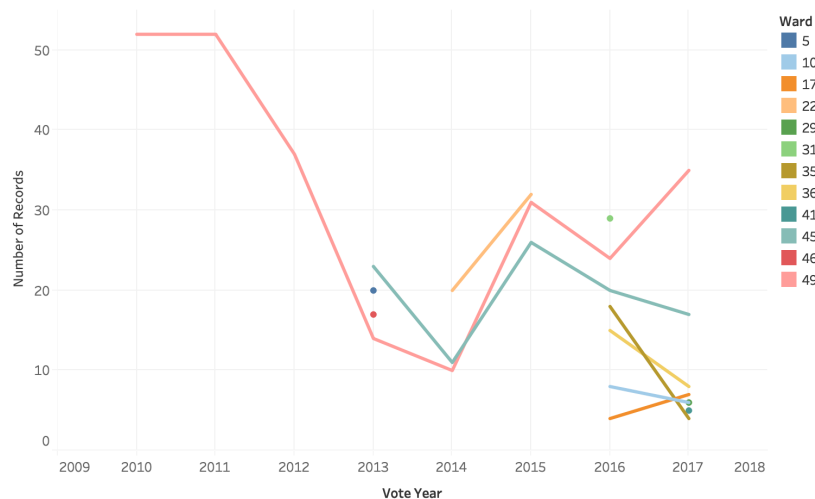
Standardized Category (color) and count of Number of Records (size).

Figure 7

Figure 8 below shows the distribution of project proposals from each ward in each vote year. The graph tells us the following narrative:

- 2009–2012: The 49th ward was the only ward to participate in PB. Over this period, the amount of project proposals dropped significantly.
- 2013: Joining the 49th ward, the 45th ward began to participate in PB. The 5th and 46th wards only participated in PB this year.

- 2014-2015: the 22nd ward participated in PB for two years, then stopped. Participating wards (22nd, 46th, and 49th) saw an uptick in project proposals.
- 2015-2016: Participating wards (46th and 49th) saw a slight drop in project proposals.
- 2016: Five new wards (31st, 35th, 36th, 10th, and 17th) began to participate in PB. The 31st ward only participated in PB this year.
- 2017: The 29th and 41st ward began to participate in PB. Project data only ranges till 2017.

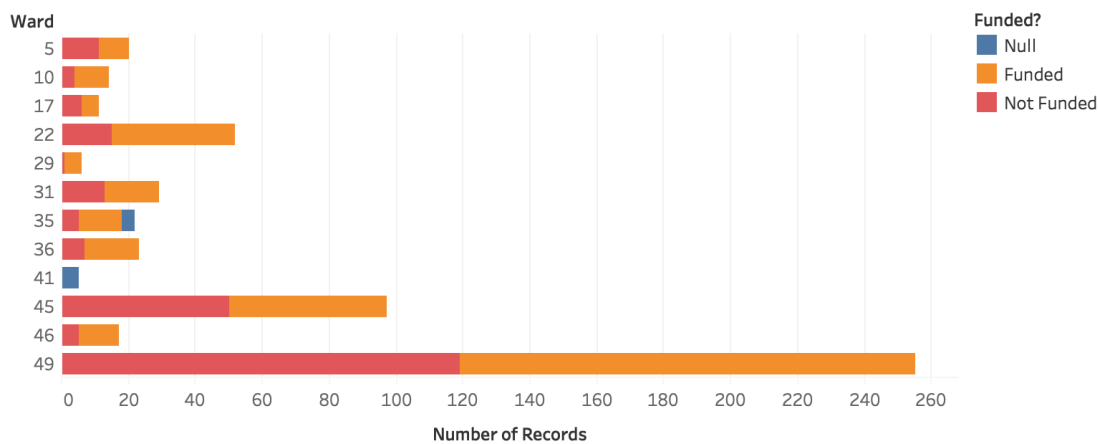


The trend of sum of Number of Records for Vote Year. Color shows details about Ward.

Figure 8

From this dataset, we can also obtain the distribution of participatory budgeting proposals from each ward and the proportion of project proposals that were funded in each ward, as depicted in Figure 10. The 49th ward, which has been participating in PB for the longest, has a roughly equal proportion of projects that

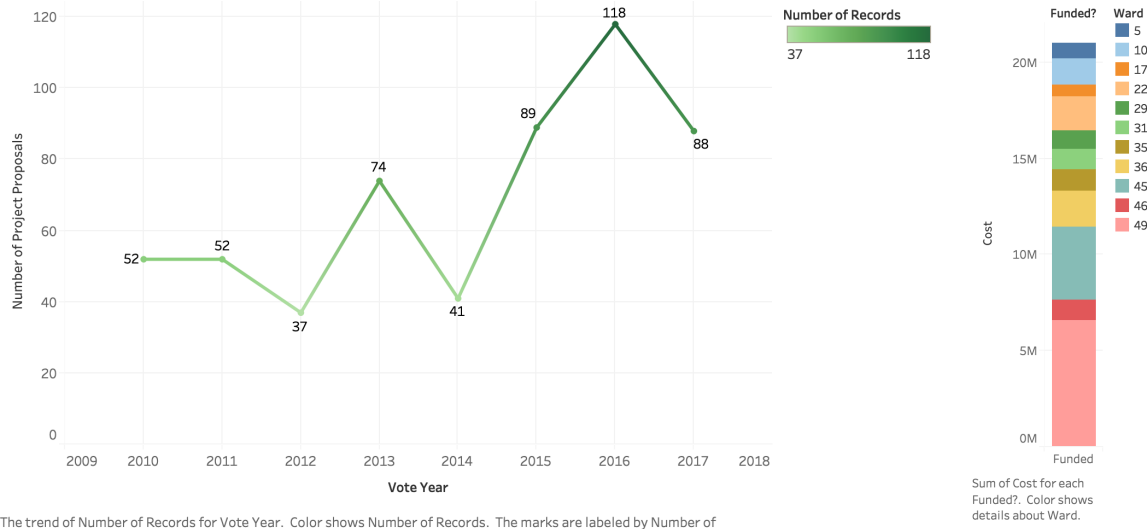
were funded and not funded. However, the 29th ward only did not fund 1 project proposal out of 5: due to the newness of the program, they did not receive as many project proposals and thus were able to fund more of the projects. We can reasonably conclude that as participatory budgeting is established for longer in a ward, more project proposals will be solicited each cycle through word of mouth and public outreach. Given more funding, wards could accommodate funding even more of these project proposals – this would mean that the long-term labor of putting together a viable project proposal would not go to waste.



Sum of Number of Records for each Ward. Color shows details about Funded?.

Figure 9

The overall amount of project proposals has increased over the years, as participatory budgeting has spread to other wards (Figure 10). However, sharp and erratic drops in project proposals occurred in 2012, 2014, and 2017. A drop in project proposals in 2017 could be explained by the incomplete dataset: it is possible that, when the dataset was compiled in 2017, project proposals were still being



submitted for that year. This doesn't explain the sharp drops

in project proposals in 2012 or 2014; however, the reasons why project proposals dropped sharply in certain years are of less concern to this study, although they might lend themselves to further research.

Figure 10

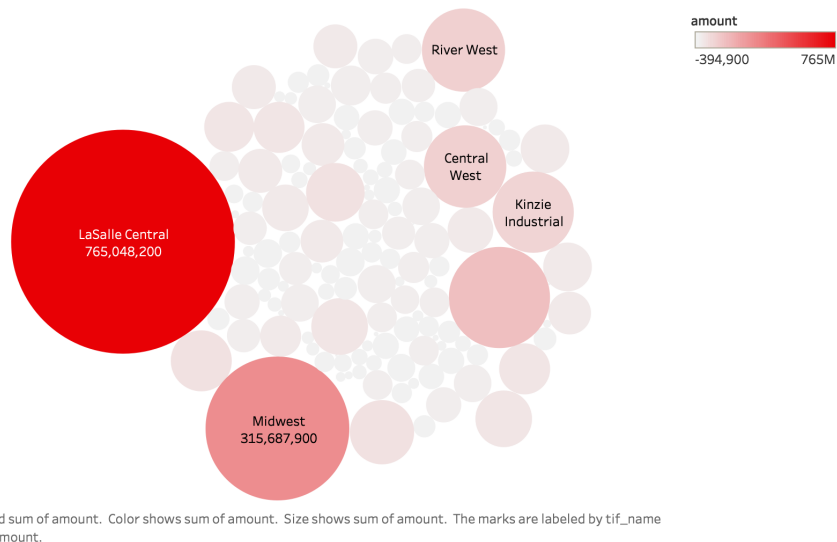
Figure 11

In Figure 11 we can see that the total amount of money that has been democratically allocated towards improving wards from 2010 to 2017 is upwards of \$20 million – not an insignificant amount for such a new and ambitious program. The distribution of funds favors the 49th ward, as it has been participating in participatory budgeting since its inception in Chicago in 2010. Therefore, it is expected that the total amount of funding provided to their project proposals has cumulatively been far higher than that of other wards.

II. TIFs

From the Projected TIF Revenue dataset, I found that the TIF districts estimated to have the most revenue are LaSalle Central, Midwest, Chicago/Kingsbury (unlabeled), Kinzie Industrial Corridor, Central West, and River West. These TIF districts are far outperforming the others, with the highest grossing (LaSalle Central) projected to have \$765 million through 2030. We can see the geographic distribution of these highest-performing TIF districts in Figure 13 below, which uses the TIF district outlines provided by the City of Chicago's TIF Portal as a base map.

Figure 12



Tif_name and sum of amount. Color shows sum of amount. Size shows sum of amount. The marks are labeled by tif_name and sum of amount.

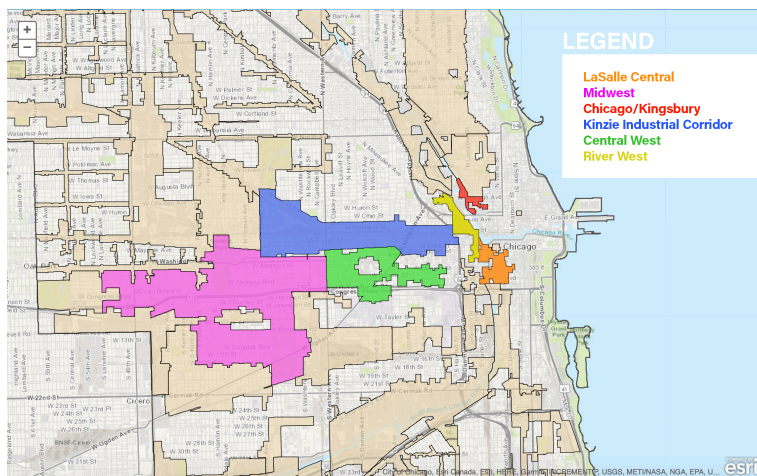


Figure 13

To evaluate the recent financial state of other TIF districts, I looked at the TIF 2016-2017 Revenue Comparison dataset provided by the Office of the Cook County Clerk. This dataset shows the change in revenue for all TIF districts from 2016 to 2017. From Figure 14, we can see that almost all of the highest grossing TIF districts have continued to increase in size. This trend tells us that TIFs, as they exist right now, are for the most part a growing and reliable funding source.

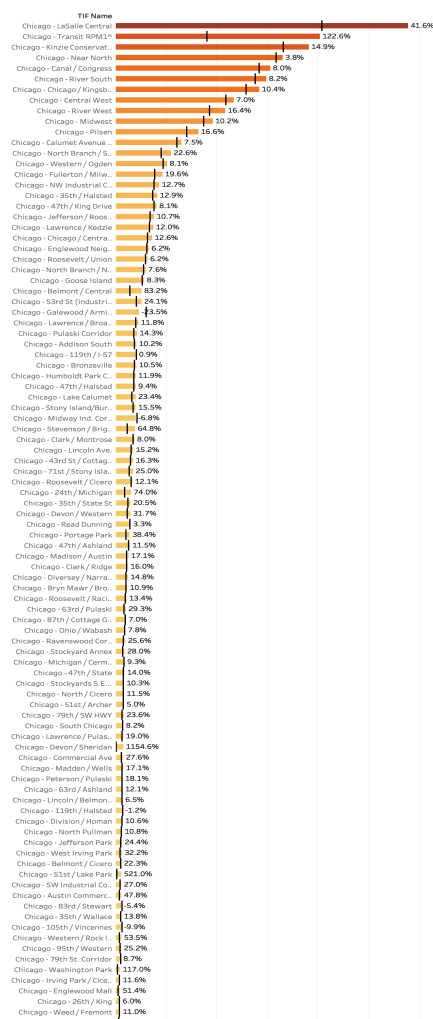


Figure 14

From the TIF Status and Eligibility dataset, I found that, out of the 144 TIF districts that are active as of 2019, all of them are listed as either ‘blighted’ or in need of ‘conservation.’ Given this definition, it is difficult to see how certain TIF districts in the Loop, such as LaSalle Central, could qualify as in need of ‘conservation,’ as they are currently listed in this dataset. In 2018, a press release from the Cook County Clerk’s office stated that as much as 1 in 4 properties in Chicago are in TIF districts.⁵⁵ This would mean that 1 in 4 properties in Chicago are in areas that the city of Chicago deems as ‘blighted’ or in need

⁵⁵ “Cook County TIFs to Bring in a Record \$1 Billion According to Clerk Orr; Transit TIF Revenue Doubled | Cook County Clerk’s Office,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/news/cook-county-tifs-bring-record-1-billion-according-clerk-orr-transit-tif-revenue-doubled>

of ‘conservation.’

The TIF Project Tracker confirmed what is suggested by critics about TIF project distribution. Figure 15 shows a map with all TIF projects completed as of April 11, 2019, excluding TIF entries that named one of the following as a developer: Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, and Chicago Transit Authority. The map shows the geographic distribution of these projects across the city, along with a sample of the legend to show the kinds of developers involved. The most expensive projects are indicated with larger circles. From this graph, we can see that the most expensive TIF projects ever completed have been clustered around downtown. The most expensive TIF projects are also listed in the table in Figure 16.

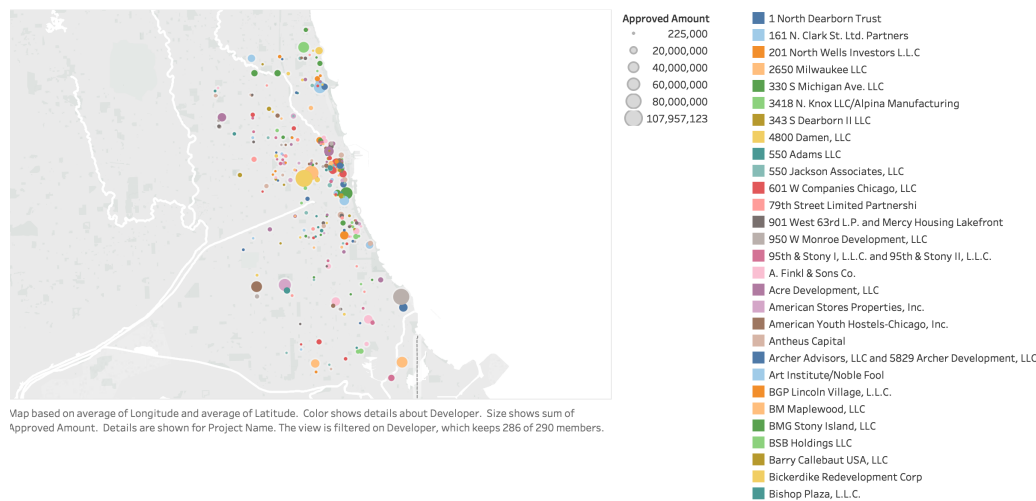


Figure 15

Figure 16

Developer	Project Name	Approved Amount
Office of University Counsel	UIC	107,957,123
Chicago Lakeside Development, LLC	South Works - McCaffery	96,859,748
Rush University Medical Center	Rush University Medical Center	75,000,000
Nabisco, Inc.	Nabisco	60,000,000
Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority	IGA - MPEA - HOTEL	55,000,000
Wilson Yard Development I, LLC	Wilson Yard	54,228,392
Tootsie Roll Industries, Inc. et al	Tootsie Roll	43,400,000
Northpoint Development	Avenue O	42,400,000
S&C Electric Co., a Delaware corp.	S & C Electric	39,735,000
Mercy Hospital and Medical Center	Mercy Hospital	38,000,000
Randolph Tower City Apartments, Inc.	Randolph Tower - II	34,000,000
Eport 600 Property Owner L.L.C.	Eport - 600 W Chicago	33,243,085
SCI	Sinai Tomorrow	31,000,000

Sum of Approved Amount broken down by Developer and Project Name. The data is filtered on Approved Amount, which ranges from 28000000 to 107957123.

If we layer a map of median income levels from Rich Blocks Poor Blocks over this map of TIF projects, we see that many of these subsidized projects were built in areas that are well above the median income (rendered in blue in Figure 17.)

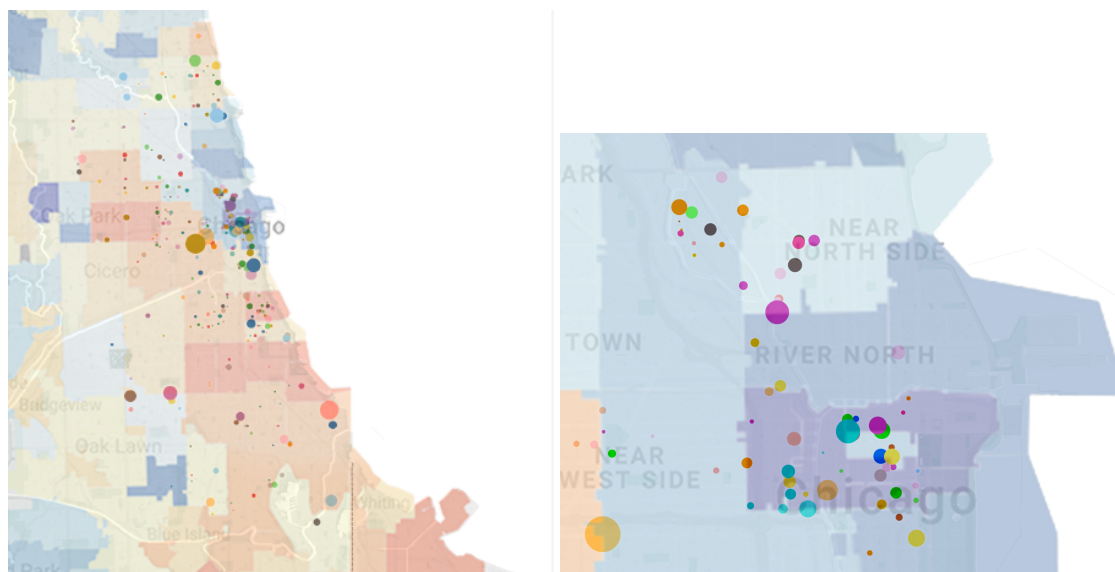


Figure 17

Qualitative

In order to gain more insight on participatory budgeting and its implementation in Chicago, as well as how PB relates to TIF, I interviewed three PB practitioners that serve in different bureaucratic roles across the city: Jessica Alvarez, the Chief of Staff at the office of Alderman Carlos Rosa of the 31st ward; Thea Crum, the Director of the Neighborhoods Initiative at the Great Cities Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago; and Alderman Joe Moore of the 49th ward, the first ward to bring participatory budgeting to the United States.

From these interviews, I found that there are a number of crucial drawbacks to the implementation of PB in Chicago that prevent it from being a successful vehicle for equity and democracy. The problems with participatory budgeting in its current iteration are the following:

I. Funding limitations

Today, participatory budgeting in Chicago wards is used to allocate a small pool of ‘menu money,’ provided by the alderman of each ward. Menu money can only be used for certain types of projects—namely, infrastructure reform – preventing anything outside this constraint from being funded. “You certainly have to manage expectations,” says Alderman Joe Moore regarding the limitations of menu money. Menu money must be spent only on capital expenditures, not on operations or services. Participatory budgeting is no stranger to limitations: most PB processes in the United States are restricted to “relatively small and constrained budget funds.”⁵⁶ However, the bureaucratic obstacles that menu money poses are specific to Chicago. Moore says, “as much as you might want to hire more police officers and teachers, or use [menu money] for after school programs or tutoring, that’s not what the money is for.” Menu money is the only substantial sum of money that the alderman has discretion over, so it is the only pool that they can decide to allocate to PB.

⁵⁶ Thea Crum et al., *Building a People's Budget: Draft Research and Evaluation Report on the 2013-2014 Participatory Budgeting Process in Chicago*, report, Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago, February 2015, 3, accessed December 4, 2017.

These limitations on what menu money can be used for prevent PB from being used to its greatest potential. But in addition to these limitations, the sheer amount of menu money available poses a problem: the \$1.32 million that aldermen can allocate to PB is insufficient to enact large-scale change. Menu money comes from the Aldermanic Menu Program, which allocates \$1.32 million per ward from Capital Improvement Program general obligation bonds.⁵⁷ This \$1.32 million per ward was first decided upon in 2012, and the amount has not gone up since then. This amount is far too little to make substantial changes to the ward, past basic infrastructural changes.

Project proposals can become very expensive, especially as the city of Chicago must use the specific contractors they have business relationships with. Figure 18 on the next page, an excerpt from the 2019 Neighborhood Infrastructure Menu Program, shows the estimated pricing for various infrastructure improvements that menu money could be put toward.

In the cases of projects that exceed the scope of resurfacing a street or fixing a sidewalk curb, community members often must look outside the PB process and rely on outside funding sources. In the 2013-2014 cycle, over \$1.6 million in additional funding beyond menu money was used to implement winning project proposals.⁵⁸ An example of one such project requiring additional funding is the new

⁵⁷ “City of Chicago :: Capital Improvement Program,” accessed April 17, 2019, https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/obm/provdrs/cap_improve.html

⁵⁸ Thea Crum et al., Building a People's Budget: Draft Research and Evaluation Report on the 2013-2014 Participatory Budgeting Process in Chicago, report, Great

playground built in 2018 at Nixon Elementary in Hermosa, falling in the 35th ward. Concerned parents in the ward initially began a campaign to replace the old

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM	ESTIMATED PRICING		In-road "State Law Stop for Pedestrians" signs	\$350 per Location for 1 sign \$600 per Location for 2 signs	\$350 per Location for 1 sign \$600 per Location for 2 signs
	2018	2019			
Streets, Alleys and Bikes					
Residential Street Resurfacing	\$43,500 per Block for First 5 Blocks \$72,000 for Subsequent Blocks	\$43,500 per Block for First 5 Blocks \$72,000 for Subsequent Blocks	Streets, Alleys and Bikes (Continued)	2018	2019
Residential Alley Resurfacing	\$31,500 for First Alley \$49,500 for Subsequent Alleys	\$31,500 for First Alley \$49,500 for Subsequent Alleys	Protected Bike Lanes	\$125,000 per Half-Mile	\$125,000 per Half-Mile
Green Alley Program	\$150,000 per Block	\$150,000 per Block	Buffered Bike Lanes	\$50,000 per Half-Mile	\$50,000 per Half-Mile
Alley Speed Hump Program	\$1,400 per Block	\$1,400 per Block	Bike Lane/Marked Shared Lane	\$30,000 per Half-Mile	\$30,000 per Half-Mile
Concrete Alley Aprons	\$10,000 per Location	\$10,000 per Location			
Street Speed Hump Program	\$3,700 per Block	\$4,700 per Block	LIGHTING AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS	2018	2019
Sidewalk Replacement Program	\$75,000 per Block	\$75,000 per Block	Street Light Pole Painting Program	\$300 per Pole	\$300 per Pole
Curb & Gutter Replacement Program	\$80,000 per Block	\$80,000 per Block	Traffic Signal Intersection Pole Painting Program	\$3,500 per Intersection	\$3,500 per Intersection
Diagonal Parking	\$65,000 per Project	\$65,000 per Project	Residential Street Lighting Program with Piggy Backs	\$83,000 per Block	\$91,000 per Block
Residential Street Cul-de-Sac	\$25,000 per Project	\$25,000 per Project	Arterial Street Lighting Installation	\$147,500 per Block	\$147,500 per Block
Neighborhood Greenways (Bike Boulevard)	\$60,000 per Half-Mile	\$60,000 per Half-Mile	Left-Turn Arrow Installation	\$70,000 per Intersection	\$70,000 per Intersection
Residential Street Traffic Circle	\$15,000 per Project	\$15,000 per Project	Viaduct Improvement Program	Various Costs	Various Costs
Residential Street Bump Outs	\$15,000 per Pair	\$15,000 per Pair	Floodlight Installation	\$900 per Fixture	\$900 per Fixture
Arterial Street Bump Outs	\$30,000 per Corner	\$50,000 per Corner	LED Traffic Signal Upgrades & Pedestrian Countdown Signal	\$48,000 per Intersection	\$48,000 per Intersection
Pedestrian Refuge Island	\$60,000 per Location	\$60,000 per Location			

Figure 18

playground in 2016, which they worried was dangerously unkempt.⁵⁹ Children would frequently get hurt when playing at the old playground: one parent said that kids “were slicing open legs and arms” on the old and shoddy equipment.⁶⁰ Through

Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago, February 2015, 3, accessed December 4, 2017.

⁵⁹ “COFI Parent Leaders of Nixon Elementary Build New Playground! : Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI),” accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.cofionline.org/cofi-parent-leaders-of-nixon-elementary-build-new-playground/>

⁶⁰ “Dangerous Hermosa Playground Replaced After Parents ‘Kept Knocking’ On Closed Doors – Block Club Chicago,” accessed April 17, 2019,

PB in the 35th ward, community residents had voted to allocate \$90,000 to the new playground, but this was not enough to fund its construction. Parents had to seek outside funding, which they finally received in the form of donations from KaBOOM!, a non-profit dedicated to promoting active play for children, and Foresters Financial, an international financial services provider that partnered with KaBOOM!.⁶¹ After three years of fundraising, the park finally made it to completion.

If PB had access to a larger pool of funding, the parents of Hermosa (a neighborhood that is 90.5% Hispanic with a median income almost \$11,000 less than that of Chicago) would not have had to wait three years for a new playground.⁶²⁶³ Obtaining additional funding can be a long and arduous process, especially for persons in working-class communities of color. The process of PB is a model for democracy, but given the limitations on how funds can be acquired and spent, the program is not able to have its intended impact.

When aldermen use their menu money to fund participatory budgeting, an issue with equity also arises. Although, from a bird's eye view, wards are roughly the same in terms of population, there are discrepancies with per capita funding

<https://blockclubchicago.org/2018/06/28/dangerous-hermosa-playground-replaced-after-parents-kept-knocking-on-closed-doors/>

⁶¹ “Foresters Financial and KaBOOM! Partner to Increase Play Opportunities for Chicago Kids | Business Wire,” accessed April 17, 2019,

<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180630005001/en/Foresters-Financial-KaBOOM%21-Partner-Increase-Play-Opportunities>

⁶² “Hermosa.Pdf.” Accessed April 17, 2019.

<https://www.cmap.illinois.gov/documents/10180/126764/Hermosa.pdf>

⁶³ Office of Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, “Progress and People Power in the 35th Ward: 2015-2018,” July 24, 2018.

when the same \$1.32 million is allocated to different wards. Dividing the \$1.32 million per ward by the Estimated Ward Populations dataset, we get the distribution of per capita funding in Figure 19, if all wards participated in PB with their menu money.

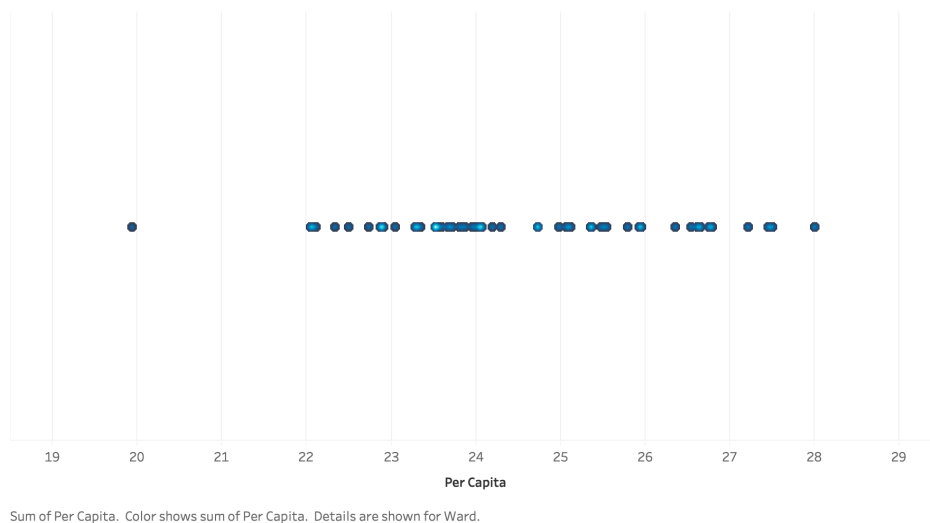


Figure 19

The ward with the least funding per capita is the 42nd ward, with \$19.94/person allocated for participatory budgeting. The ward with the most funding per capita is the 15th ward, with \$27.99/person allocated for participatory budgeting. If the 42nd ward were to get the same per capita funding as the 15th ward, menu money for the 42nd ward would have to be more than \$1.85 million. This amount is 140.4% of the existing menu money allocated to each alderman, which is \$1.32 million. These discrepancies in equity have implications for participatory budgeting on the ground: different wards are arbitrarily favored with additional menu money per capita to spend on public improvements. A static amount of menu money that doesn't take population differences into consideration is not the right

funding source for a democratic program. A truly democratic funding source would offer funding calculated per capita rather than per ward.

II. Lack of capacity

Introducing a new program like PB to a ward is no easy task: it requires a dedicated aldermanic staffer to take on the work of familiarizing the community with the program, bottom-lining public outreach programs to ensure all demographics are reached, serving as a mediator between the alderman and community members, and holding government agencies accountable to implementing selected project proposals – among other responsibilities. Wards that have this kind of staffing are far more successful at engaging in PB. The 49th ward under Alderman Joe Moore – the first ward to introduce PB to Chicago – has by far the largest engagement in PB, in no small part because Moore has a staffer dedicated to running the program. Moore was able to hire this staffer because he is a committee chairman: when an alderman is a committee chairman, they receive more staff and a larger budget. These benefits enabled him to devote more resources to the management of PB in his ward. Moore estimates that his dedicated PB staffer spends about 80% her time on PB. He also has access to an additional budget to override the costs of publicity and outreach. Moore believes that certain wards drop PB because it is very “labor-intensive,” and “takes a lot of time and money.” Many of his city council colleagues who are not committee chairmen have attempted to jumpstart PB in their wards, but they simply do not have the capacity to run the program. Without the additional benefits that being a committee chairman brings,

it is very difficult – if not completely infeasible – to effectively run a PB process. “Democracy is a lot of work,” says Thea Crum.

Meanwhile, the local aldermanic staffers who are administering PB as just one of their many responsibilities are severely overburdened. Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa of the 35th ward. is not a committee chairman, and so he does not have the benefits of an increased staff and budget that Alderman Joe Moore does. However, the office of Alderman Ramirez-Rosa believes in democratically engaging the community in decisions about menu money, and so they oversee a PB process in the 35th ward. Jessica Alvarez is the Chief of Staff for Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa. She also manages PB at the 35th ward aldermanic office. Alvarez has several responsibilities outside managing PB – but she also performs all the duties of a dedicated PB staffer, such as managing the steering committee, identifying potential community leaders, strategizing to grow the program, and more. Though the GCI provides support, the aldermanic staff ultimately has to do all of the work and outreach.

Overburdened staffers are not performing at their full capacity. When these staffers are responsible for too many programs, not only does their health suffer, but the initiatives that they are in charge of suffer. Participatory budgeting in the 35th ward, for example, could be far better served by a dedicated staffer whose job it is to oversee the implementation of PB in the ward, as well as brainstorm about ways to improve the program. The program as it is currently being administered in the 35th ward has less of a chance to access and spread to new communities, become

more efficient, or innovate, because there is a lack of capacity in the office to manage the program.

Participatory budgeting is not only suffering from a lack of staffing at the ward-level: a lack of municipal oversight is contributing to the fragmentation and stall of the program. Crum says, “Chicago is the only city in the United States where the city gives no resources to participatory budgeting. They don’t pay for consulting services. They don’t even pay for printing the ballots.”

A report released by the GCI in 2013 announced that the Mayor and City Council had voted to fund the hiring of a new City of Chicago Assistant Budget Director, whose primary task was to “support aldermen as they implement[ed] PB projects.”⁶⁴

This Assistant Budget Director would be responsible, among other things, for developing a resource guide for aldermen, enumerating eligible menu money projects, estimated costs, and necessary contractual agreements.

Jessica Alvarez informed me that the City of Chicago hired Paul Moody to fill this position in 2014. But Moody’s role in the Office of Budget Management very quickly morphed into a different role: one he occupies now, where he oversees project proposals that are categorized as ‘nontraditional,’ such as those that involve DCASE, CPS, or CPD. According to Alvarez, Moody’s responsibilities changed because several city leaders objected to the attention and resources that the City was giving to the PB process. Now, the role that Moody was supposed to be

⁶⁴ “Building-a-Peoples-Budget-2013-2014-PB-Research-Report.Pdf,” accessed December 10, 2018, <https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Building-a-Peoples-Budget-2013-2014-PB-Research-Report.pdf>

occupying is vacant – if not in name, in responsibility. There is no one overseeing the process of PB at the municipal level, despite 12 wards participating in the program individually.⁶⁵ Participating wards instead rely on both financial and technical assistance from non-profits (like UIC, the municipal agent of PB, and Our City our Voice, the federal agent of PB) who help guide the process.

Though the GCI considers themselves “stewards of the process,” rather than leaders, these nonprofits are instrumental to the functioning of PB in Chicago. Among other responsibilities, they provide technical assistance, set up online voting, compile and print ballots, offer translation services, and explain the program to ward constituents. Thea Crum, the Director of the Neighborhoods Initiative at the Great Cities Institute at University of Illinois at Chicago, performs asset and demographic mapping, collects evaluation data, fundraises, and builds relationships on the ground with local officials and community leaders. She runs trainings on facilitation techniques, teaching officials how to have different kinds of deliberative conversations with residents. She says, “it takes work with marginalized communities to build trust in local government, to create an environment that makes them comfortable engaging.” Crum is on the payroll of the GCI at UIC, which is funded through a grant from the McCormick Foundation. There is no municipal support for the administration of PB: neither aldermanic staffers nor nonprofit allies receive any additional funding from the city to

⁶⁵ “PB in Chicago,” Participatory Budgeting In Chicago, accessed April 17, 2019, <http://www.pbchicago.org/pb-in-chicago.html>

implement PB. In addition, the success of PB as a program is currently contingent on the funding of the GCI.

Policy Recommendations

Smart city growth requires a consistent, streamlined path to economic redevelopment – not a system mired with overlapping, confusing bureaucratic processes with little to no centralized oversight. Incentives such as TIF financing have proven to be unpopular with constituents and inordinately beneficial to private corporations. Participatory budgeting, although attempting to recreate democratic structure in the city, ultimately fails in its current iteration because of its poor implementation and lack of resources. A solution to these mangled bureaucratic processes lies in the consolidation of these programs, allowing participatory processes to guide the use of TIF money.

The first step that must be taken is to **institutionalize PB in every ward**. PB has the potential to bring democracy back to communities and encourage residents who have distrust in government, but the program will succeed on a city-wide level only if everyone has access to it. PB currently exists as an opt-in process, where aldermen can decide whether to allocate their menu money to PB. If the City of Chicago required all wards to institute a PB process, the feasibility of participatory budgeting would not be hindered by aldermanic discretion. Jessica Alvarez says that even in wards where aldermen have publicly stated they will set up a participatory budgeting process, they will sometimes not go through with it,

unless residents hold their alderman accountable. Aldermen in Chicago have in the past bought votes with their menu money by resurfacing streets and performing other infrastructure maintenance in key voting blocs. Menu money has often been used “for questionable purposes or left unspent.”⁶⁶ If PB were able to access consistent municipal funding, overseen by City Council, the program would not have to rely on aldermanic discretion and menu money to succeed.

PB in every ward needs a larger pool of money to draw from in order to make more substantial change in communities. TIF funds currently bring in nearly \$500 million in revenue every year.⁶⁷ In order to deal with the funding limitations imposed on PB by the nature and amount of menu money, I recommend that City Council split the revenue generated by TIFs every year among the 50 Chicago wards. Because each ward has a different population, I recommend that the allocation be made per capita: looking at Figure 20, we see that TIFs brought in \$461 million in 2015.⁶⁸ Splitting this TIF revenue equally among the 2,711,666 million residents of Chicago wards (taken from the Estimated Ward Populations dataset) we get a multiplier of \$170.01 per capita. If we multiply this with

⁶⁶ Rachel Weber, Thea Crum, and Eduardo Salinas, “The Civics of Community Development: Participatory Budgeting in Chicago,” *Community Development* 46, no. 3 (May 27, 2015): 261–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15575330.2015.1028081>

⁶⁷ “Chicago TIFs Take Nearly \$500M in Yearly Tax Revenues Away from Other Local Governments,” Illinois Policy, August 22, 2017, <https://www.illinoispolicy.org/chicago-tifs-take-nearly-500m-in-yearly-tax-revenues-away-from-other-local-governments/>

⁶⁸ “Chicago TIFs Take Nearly \$500M in Yearly Tax Revenues Away from Other Local Governments,” Illinois Policy, August 22, 2017, <https://www.illinoispolicy.org/chicago-tifs-take-nearly-500m-in-yearly-tax-revenues-away-from-other-local-governments/>

individual ward populations (also taken from the Estimated Ward Populations dataset), we get the sample allocation breakdown in Figure 21. These allocations

Figure 21

Ward	Alderman	Total2016	Recommended All.
01	Moreno	56,661	\$9,632,985.29
02	Hopkins	57,705	\$9,810,372.41
03	Dowell	55,763	\$9,480,346.41
04	King	57,301	\$9,741,754.58
05	Hairston	52,073	\$8,852,921.05
06	Sawyer	49,735	\$8,455,513.51
07	Mitchell	49,609	\$8,434,105.53
08	Harris	48,507	\$8,246,716.29
09	Beale	50,863	\$8,647,179.88
10	Sadlowski Garza	49,342	\$8,388,698.01
11	Thompson	54,977	\$9,346,719.09
12	Cardenas	50,915	\$8,656,124.77
13	Quinn	56,692	\$9,638,191.68
14	Burke	54,864	\$9,327,472.21
15	Lopez	47,155	\$8,016,817.52
16	Foulkes	49,535	\$8,421,448.46
17	Moore	49,271	\$8,376,488.29
18	Curtis	54,355	\$9,240,909.48
19	O'Shea	52,676	\$8,955,400.45
20	Cochran	47,996	\$8,159,873.35
21	Brookins	50,096	\$8,516,897.46
22	Munoz	52,551	\$8,934,138.06
23	Tabares	55,314	\$9,403,922.14
24	Scott	52,041	\$8,847,530.12
25	Solis	52,840	\$8,983,266.58
26	Maldonado	51,809	\$8,808,024.14
27	Burnett	55,109	\$9,369,004.06
28	Ervin	56,091	\$9,536,057.99
29	Taliaferro	55,647	\$9,460,515.58
30	Reboyas	56,143	\$9,544,867.78
31	Santiago	51,689	\$8,787,621.83
32	Waguespack	59,098	\$10,047,213.22
33	Mell	56,121	\$9,541,058.89
34	Austin	48,099	\$8,177,383.23
35	Ramirez-Rosa	54,557	\$9,275,234.21
36	Villegas	53,377	\$9,074,700.24
37	Mitts	51,178	\$8,700,690.68
38	Sposato	59,861	\$10,176,949.26
39	Laurino	57,712	\$9,811,587.45
40	O'Connor	55,942	\$9,510,630.05
41	Napolitano	54,866	\$9,327,737.14
42	Reilly	66,203	\$11,255,165.67
43	Smith	58,670	\$9,974,458.07
44	Tunney	59,871	\$10,178,635.89
45	Arena	57,629	\$9,797,587.71
46	Cappleman	53,370	\$9,073,424.22
47	Pawar	59,723	\$10,153,453.78
48	Osterman	55,446	\$9,426,430.11
49	Moore	56,544	\$9,613,125.75
50	Silverstein	58,073	\$9,872,916.76
Total	Null	2,711,666	\$461,010,266.36

sum up to a total of \$461,010,266.36, which is over-budget by roughly \$10,000; ideally, however, with access to better data, these calculations will be more accurate.

With this amount of funding, residents engaged in participatory budgeting would be able to fund neighborhood revitalization initiatives and creative projects, instead of just fixing the infrastructural problems that they have in their wards. Currently, people are voting whether to spend their money paving cracks in the sidewalk or fixing broken stoplights. In the 49th ward, under Alderman Joe Moore, about 2/3 of Moore's menu money in the most recent PB cycle was spent on basic infrastructure. Moore says that at the outset of the PB process, he asks constituents how much of the PB money they feel

needs to go towards basic infrastructure. The average response is generally around 60%. One aldermanic staffer referred to PB as “democracy under neoliberal austerity”: as the city takes a long time to fix basic infrastructure on its own due to

austerity budgets, residents use their slim PB funds to accelerate these processes. With more funding allocated to PB, not only could these infrastructural fixes be completed, but residents could actually use the program to better their communities in more meaningful ways.

This recommendation must be implemented in tandem with a change to state law: currently, the TIF Act stipulates that TIF funds be used only for brick and mortar expenses. Although accountability around this is vague and non-existent, an ordinance should be passed to allow TIF funds to be used for programmatic and operational expenses, not just infrastructure or architecture.

It is integral to the success of PB and the health and wellbeing of communities that the funds accessible to PB are not just limited to capital improvements, but rather can be used for services, operations, and programming. New York City, which introduced PB after Chicago, has far surpassed Chicago in its successful implementation of the program. Funds that are earmarked for PB in New York City can be used for programmatic expenses and operational budget items. “They have a different system than menu money, and it’s less restricted,” says GCI’s Thea Crum. “The politics are different in New York City. Things moved a lot more quickly.” In Brazil’s Porto Alegre, funds allocated to PB are also not limited to infrastructure spending: they can be used for programs and services, as well.⁶⁹ This lack of restrictions on how funds can be used results in more ambitious and diverse

⁶⁹ Madeleine Pape and Josh Lerner, "Budgeting for Equity: How Can Participatory Budgeting Advance Equity in the United States," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 12, no. 2 (October 13, 2016): 1, accessed December 4, 2017, <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/jpd/vol12/iss2/art9>.

projects proposals from the community. Alderman Joe Moore believes this would “encourage more participation” in Chicago, since “not everyone is motivated by infrastructure – but a lot of people are encouraged by programmatic things.” In New York City and Brazil, having municipal oversight and an unrestricted municipal funding source eliminates both the problems of discretion of district officials and menu money limitations.

I also recommend that the city of Chicago hire more staffing to coordinate the implementation of PB. The city of Chicago should hire a municipal staffer in the Office of Budget Management to oversee the implementation of participatory budgeting in individual wards. Individual aldermanic offices should also have access to funds set aside at the municipal level to hire additional staffers and interns to coordinate participatory budgeting, as needed. In some wards with smaller constituencies, an additional staffer might not be necessary; however, as we have seen in the case of the 35th ward, certain wards are already overburdened with responsibilities and cannot invest the time or resources to help PB grow.

Conclusion

Thea Crum recounts that residents in Chicago often get frustrated from hearing that their project ideas are infeasible given the current restrictions affecting PB. They often ask her to just give them a list of the projects that will get approved by city agencies. Crum’s answer is always an emphatic “No!” – she wants

to ensure that residents maintain their sense of creativity and liberation, and that they don't stop envisioning and fighting for projects that their communities want.

One such project in the 49th ward showed the compassion, empathy, and sense of community of Chicago residents. Community members voted through PB to build a ramp on the beach to enable people in wheelchairs and mothers in strollers to access the water. Though the 49th ward has people with physical disabilities, they are “nowhere near the majority,” according to Alderman Joe Moore. By making decisions about the ward's priorities truly participatory, and engaging people from different parts of the community, “people don't just look at their own selfish interests – they look at the interests of the community as a whole.”

Participatory budgeting has the most potential for success when implemented in tandem with other democratic processes, giving communities the most control over the spaces they inhabit. In the 35th ward, Alderman Ramirez-Rosa has implemented a program called Community Driven Zoning and Development (CDZD), where residents can democratically vote on zoning changes in their neighborhoods.⁷⁰ These zoning changes can then open up spaces for different uses and spur creativity, entrepreneurship, and innovation in the ward, leading to the creation of public and private spaces that people actually enjoy being in, that give people pride in their communities.

In 2019, new mayor Lori Lightfoot was elected in the city of Chicago. It seems she will take a stern stance against TIFs: before she was elected, she stated that

⁷⁰ Office of Alderman Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, “Progress and People Power in the 35th Ward: 2015-2018,” July 24, 2018.

she would not allow the city of Chicago to create any new TIF districts until the city can ensure that pre-existing TIF districts are performing as desired and “private recipients of TIF funds are satisfying their contractual obligations.”⁷¹ It remains to be seen whether her tenure as Mayor will curb developer subsidies and backroom deals in Chicago; however, as a stop-gap measure, instituting participatory processes like PB and CDZD at the ward level in Chicago will strengthen democracy, and communities will be able to determine for themselves what they want their neighborhoods to look like. These kinds of participatory processes ritualize political engagement, teaching residents the value inherent in civic life and engaging them in their community for the better.

⁷¹ “Where 16 Chicago Mayoral Candidates Stand on TIFs: Their Full Responses | Chicago Sun-Times,” accessed April 17, 2019, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/where-16-chicago-mayoral-candidates-stand-on-tifs-their-full-responses/>

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