

TIF Policy Reform Proposals

Proposal 1: CivicLab

Background description: The CivicLab is a 501 c 3 Black led nonprofit “do tank” dedicated to research, innovation, tool building, and capacity expansion to accelerate and deepen work around grassroots democracy and social justice. (CivicLab, 2018)

Our demand to Mayor Lori Lightfoot and the City Council of Chicago

We demand that you shut down Chicago's out of control and racist Tax Increment Financing Program immediately. We are fed up with paying higher taxes, regressive fees, and being saddled with payday loan store debt. We are tired of our public dollars lining the pockets of wealthy and clouted developers - who then, in turn, shower you and the aldermen with campaign donations - all while our neediest communities suffer. Empty the TIF piggy bank now and send the funds in those accounts to the local units of government that should've received those funds in the first place.

(Civiclub, 2018)

Proposal 2: Mayor Lightfoot's Administration

Background description: Part of larger agenda the mayor enacted regarding TIF funding in the first year of her administration.

Creation of a new TIF Investment Committee: As one of her first acts in office, Mayor Lightfoot reorganized an existing TIF Task Force committee that internally reviewed potential TIF expenditures. The newly created TIF Investment Committee now aims to center equity in its decision making. Supported by the city's first-ever Chief Equity Officer Candace Moore, the committee has developed a routine analysis to guide future investments and ensure they are aligned with the administration's commitment to promoting equity citywide. The committee will continue to meet mostly to review proposals that expand access to TIF funds for businesses and neighborhoods that have historically lacked the investments that other neighborhoods enjoyed.

(Mayors Press Office, 2020)

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Proposal 1: Chicago's Teacher Union

Background description: The Chicago Teachers Union represents more than 25,000 teachers and educational support personnel working in Chicago Public Schools, and by extension, the nearly 400,000 students and families they serve. The CTU is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers and the Illinois Federation of Teachers and is the third-largest teachers local in the United States.

((CTU Local 1, 2020)

If the mayor is truly serious about TIF reform, she should sunset downtown TIF districts early, which would return \$400 million annually for schools, parks, libraries, the city budget and other projects. This is especially important while Chicago Public Schools is undertaking a review of its budgeting process, and at a time when our school district is underfunded by \$2.4 billion annually, according to the State of Illinois.

CTU Local 1, 2020)

Proposal 2: Mayor Lightfoot's Administration

Background description: Part of larger agenda the mayor enacted regarding TIF funding in the first year of her administration.

Rigorous Analysis of TIF proposals: The TIF Investment Committee has directed the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to adopt a more robust “but-for” analysis for all private applicants for TIF funds. These changes, which affect the way TIF spending occurs in existing TIF districts, are meant to guarantee that TIF funds are only used for projects that wouldn’t otherwise move forward.

(Mayors Press Office, 2020)

TIF Policy Reform Proposals

Proposal 1: Chicago United For Equity

Background description: As City Council voted to approve the TIF investments of Lincoln Yards & "The 78", CUE was asked to facilitate a Racial Equity Impact Assessment by a coalition of organizers, faith leaders, and business owners. ((CUE, 2019)

Lincoln Yards and The 78: Prevent further harm to most impacted communities

- 1a. Stop the relocation of General Iron to the Southeast Side
- 1b. Stop infrastructure components of both RDAs of which work has not yet started.
- 1c. Proactively implement policies to address residential and commercial displacement around both projects.
- 1d. Develop a meaningful community role in shaping these developments

(Chicago United for Equity, 2021)

Proposal 2: Mayor Lightfoot's Administration

Background description: Part of larger agenda the mayor enacted regarding TIF funding in the first year of her administration.

Publication of new TIF Program Guide: This new guide, which will be updated annually, will offer clarity to taxpayers, researchers and the development community on how the City operates its TIF program.

(Mayors Press Office, 2020)

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Process Reform: Change How and Where TIF Is Used

- 2a. Stop using TIF to support for-profit development in affluent areas
- 2b. Include community earlier in the TIF District Designation Process
- 2c. Ensure process for longer-term reforms is community led
- 2d. Advocate for changes to state law where needed

(Chicago United for Equity, 2021)

Proposal 2: Mayor Lightfoot's Administration

Background description: Part of larger agenda the mayor enacted regarding TIF funding in the first year of her administration.

Release of data for public review: To keep Chicago residents informed of how the City is spending TIF, Mayor Lightfoot instructed the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) to publish TIF spending decisions on a monthly basis. Going forward, the City will make it easier to find information on TIF by publishing annual reports as well as a new, user-friendly version of the long-standing online TIF Portal. This information is now available at [Chicago.gov/tif](https://chicago.gov/tif).

(Mayors Press Office, 2020)

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Structural Reform: Change how we make planning and development decisions

2a. Create a comprehensive plan through a transparent, community-led process

2b. Create structures for community-led planning, development and ownership

2c. Develop and adopt development criteria that center equity

(Chicago United for Equity, 2021)

Proposal 2: Mayor Lightfoot's Administration

Background description: Part of larger agenda the mayor enacted regarding TIF funding in the first year of her administration.

These reforms build on actions taken by the Lightfoot administration to improve transparency and accountability across City government, notably with the passage of ethics reforms, an executive order eliminating aldermanic prerogative from City departments, and other structural changes to ensure that City government prioritizes efficient and fair neighborhood service delivery.

(Mayors Press Office, 2020)