



For immediate release

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Alderman Santiago Kicks Off PB Voting

31st Ward Residents to vote on Spending One Million on Infrastructure

Alderman Milly Santiago's Participatory Budgeting (PB) process opens its biggest phase today as 31st Ward residents begin voting on how to spend one million dollars on a wide variety of infrastructure projects. **Voting begins today at 9am at Kosciuszko Park, 2732 North Avers until 5pm.**

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a process where residents of the ward take part in developing ideas into ballot proposals and vote on which ones will be funded.

"This is a great opportunity for our residents to be part of an inclusive process on how to spend our menu money on projects they want", said Alderman Santiago. "Dozens of volunteers and residents from all parts of the ward have worked very hard on selecting a number of project ideas that will improve the infrastructure of our ward. This Participatory Budgeting program has been an educational experience and an effort in community building."

Voting continues through the week at various locations around the Ward and culminates on Saturday, April 30 at Foreman High School (now Foreman College and Career Academy), 3235 North Leclaire from 11am to 3pm.

The residents of the 31st Ward will vote on how to spend this chunk of City money allocated to the Ward for infrastructure improvements. Although \$1 million would go a long way if allocated to just a single project, there are many improvements and repairs that are needed.

The vote is the culmination of over 3 months of meetings, research and – albeit infrequent – arguments. The projects range from street resurfacing, on which residents will vote a percentage of the funds be allocated, to improvements in lighting, traffic calming and aesthetics. There is a fairly even distribution of safety-related and aesthetic projects.

PB is a rare democratic oasis in a city where, to be candid, decisions are questioned. The process of PB gives the residents themselves, rather than any shadowy “1%-ers” a definitive say in how the funds will be allocated. It is up to the residents to cast their votes for the projects they feel would most benefit themselves and their communities. Another rarity is that anyone age 14 or over can vote. It is an excellent opportunity for teens to get involved and experience the voting process first hand. This is the first time the 31st Ward has had an opportunity to be a part of this process; previous successful experiences in PB have already been enjoyed by the 22nd, 45th and 49th Wards. This year PB has expanded to seven wards in Chicago.

Detailed information on additional voting locations and times has been disseminated by flyers, on the Alderman’s Facebook page and at www.PBChicago.org.