

COOK COUNTY TRANSITION REPORT

DECEMBER 7, 2010





LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Cook County Citizens,

When I chose to run for the Office of Cook County Board President, it was because I saw the strong desire and need for real transformation in the County. Throughout the campaign, I heard the voices for change and reform become more amplified. And since being elected, the sentiment has been stronger than ever.

Transforming the County presents a large challenge, but one that citizens must take on together. After being elected, I asked a diverse group of civic and community leaders to come together and focus on creating a plan that would guide us forward both in the short-term and the long-term. With the help of the citizenry who submitted vision statements online, elected officials we met with, and expert pro bono civic partners brought together by the Civic Consulting Alliance, this talented group issued an ambitious but necessary set of recommendations outlined in the following report.

The recommendations issued call for change in several areas, and call for them quickly. They ask the County to become more efficient, more transparent and more responsive. And most importantly, they outline specific goals and timelines to hold our administration accountable.

I would like to thank those who contributed their time and effort to this transition effort. The outstanding teamwork exhibited in this process is responsible for laying the groundwork for transforming our government over the next four years. I strongly believe with continued help and collaboration, we can achieve our goal of creating a County government that works for its citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Toni Preckwinkle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President

COOK COUNTY BOARD PRESIDENT-ELECT TRANSITION TEAM

Honorary Chairs: Dawn Clark Netsch, James Compton, Jim Edgar, Art Velasquez
Chairs: Norm Bobins, John Rogers, Pat Ryan, Betty Lu Saltzman, Manny Sanchez, Kevin Willer

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Co-chaired by: Michael Igoe, Judy Rice
Michael Igoe Vedder Price
Judy Rice Harris Bank
Carole Brown Siebert Bradford Shank & Co.,
LLC
Adela Cepeda AC Advisory
Patrick Hagan RSM McGladrey
Adrienne Pitts Sidley Austin LLP
Elaine Romas Cook County Sheriff's Dept

Criminal Justice Organization
Chaired by: Rebecca Janowitz, Anita Ponder
Rebecca Janowitz Cook County Jail - Director of
Reentry
Anita Ponder Seyfarth Shaw LLP
Ellen Alberding Joyce Foundation
Marjorie Benton The Benton Foundation
John Coli Teamsters Union
David Olsen Professor at Loyola
Beth Richie UIC Professor
Michael Rodriguez Enlace
Rev. Stephen Thurston National Baptist Convention

Economic Development Organization
Chaired by: Martin Cabrera, Andy Mooney, Andrea Zopp
Martin Cabrera Caberera Capital Markets
Andy Mooney LISC Chicago
Andrea Zopp Chicago Urban League
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Mary Sue Barrett Metropolitan Planning Council
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merce
Lori Healey The John Buck Company
Cheryl Hyman City Colleges
Anthony Kitchens ABLE
Ngoan Le The Chicago Community Trust
Ron Powell UFCW
Juan Rangel UNO
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Jerry Roper Chicagoland Chamber of Com-
merce
Julia Stasch The John D. and Catherine T.
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Forest Preserve Organization
Chaired by: Arnold Randall, Mary Richardson-Lowry
Arnold Randall University of Chicago
Mary Richardson-Lowry Mayer Brown
Frank Beal Metropolis 2020
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Bobbie Steele Former Cook County Board Presi-
dent

Governance Organization
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Frank Clark Com Ed
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Alison Chung Teamwerks
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Joe Flanagan Access to Care
Dr. Larry Goodman Rush Hospital
Alie Kabba United African Org
William McNary Citizen Action / Illinois
Jorge Ramirez Chicago Federation of Labor
Donna Thompson Access Community Health

“My hope for you as the new President...is to create a government body free of corruption, bureaucracy, waste, and inefficiencies. I understand this will be an arduous and gradual process, but with firm, strong, and resolute leadership, I believe it is possible.”

– Cook County citizen Theresa Olson,
submitted online via the
Transition Team’s “Share Your Vision” tool





INTRODUCTION

Cook County government provides more than five million residents with vital services for public safety, health, property and economic development. It runs the second largest unified court system in the world and the second largest public hospital system in the country. Today, this government is facing significant challenges. A history of corruption and lack of leadership and professionalism have left County government with limited resources and unable to deliver the quality of services its residents require. In the immediate future, County government must address a large budget gap—21% over the three quarters of FY 2011 remaining after the budget is passed. The County's sales tax is high, which hurts economic activity in the region. To address these challenges and improve County services, County government must be transformed.

President Toni Preckwinkle was elected for her vision of a new Cook County government. Accountable to its citizens, Cook County will be transformed into the best-run County government in the country—led by its Board President with an unwavering commitment to open, honest and efficient government that provides higher quality services at lower costs.

This Transition Report describes a path for transforming County government. It is based on the ideas of Cook County citizens, including more than 150 ideas submitted online and input from a group of more than 80 public and private sector leaders who have brought diverse viewpoints and decades of experience to serve on the Preckwinkle Transition Team.

We invite you to read about high-impact initiatives that President Preckwinkle will work with County elected officials to implement in the next 100 days, and during her first term in office. The initiatives in this Transition Report will help the County to achieve four goals:

-  **Fiscal Responsibility:** Ensure County taxes are as low as possible and that taxpayer dollars are used effectively. Within 100 days, deliver a balanced FY 2011 budget closing a 21% gap. In the President's first term, institute long-term financial planning and improve County government efficiency to enable repeal of the sales tax.
-  **Innovative Leadership:** Create a culture of exemplary leadership, professionalism and collaboration in County government, which makes it possible to deliver high-quality services to residents.
-  **Transparency and Accountability:** A government that is transparent and accountable to its residents is a more effective government. Improve transparency and accountability of County government, in particular by improving public information about hiring, purchasing and the overall use of taxpayer dollars. This would strengthen public trust in County government and bolster morale of its employees.
-  **Improved Services:** Provide high-quality, reliable frontline services to the public in key areas such as criminal justice, healthcare, economic development and the Forest Preserve.

The initiatives described in this report will require collaboration across County government, including across the eleven separately elected County-wide officials, the seventeen member County board and the

Health and Hospitals System Board. While the President is responsible for the County budget, her office has direct authority over only a narrow subset of County operations. The President's office can lead by example, but it cannot begin to address the County's considerable challenges alone. To this end, the President has already begun to engage County officials on ideas for change. Continuing this collaboration is prerequisite to the success of the initiatives described, and to County government delivering more effective services to its citizens. The President proposes to host regular cross-County executive review sessions to measure progress on initiatives described in this report.



We ask you, the public, to play an active role in holding County government—each and every County official—to higher standards. To help you do this, President Preckwinkle will publish a report card on progress against these goals at the end of her first 100 days in office, and regularly thereafter.

Thank you for reading this report, for taking part in transforming Cook County government.

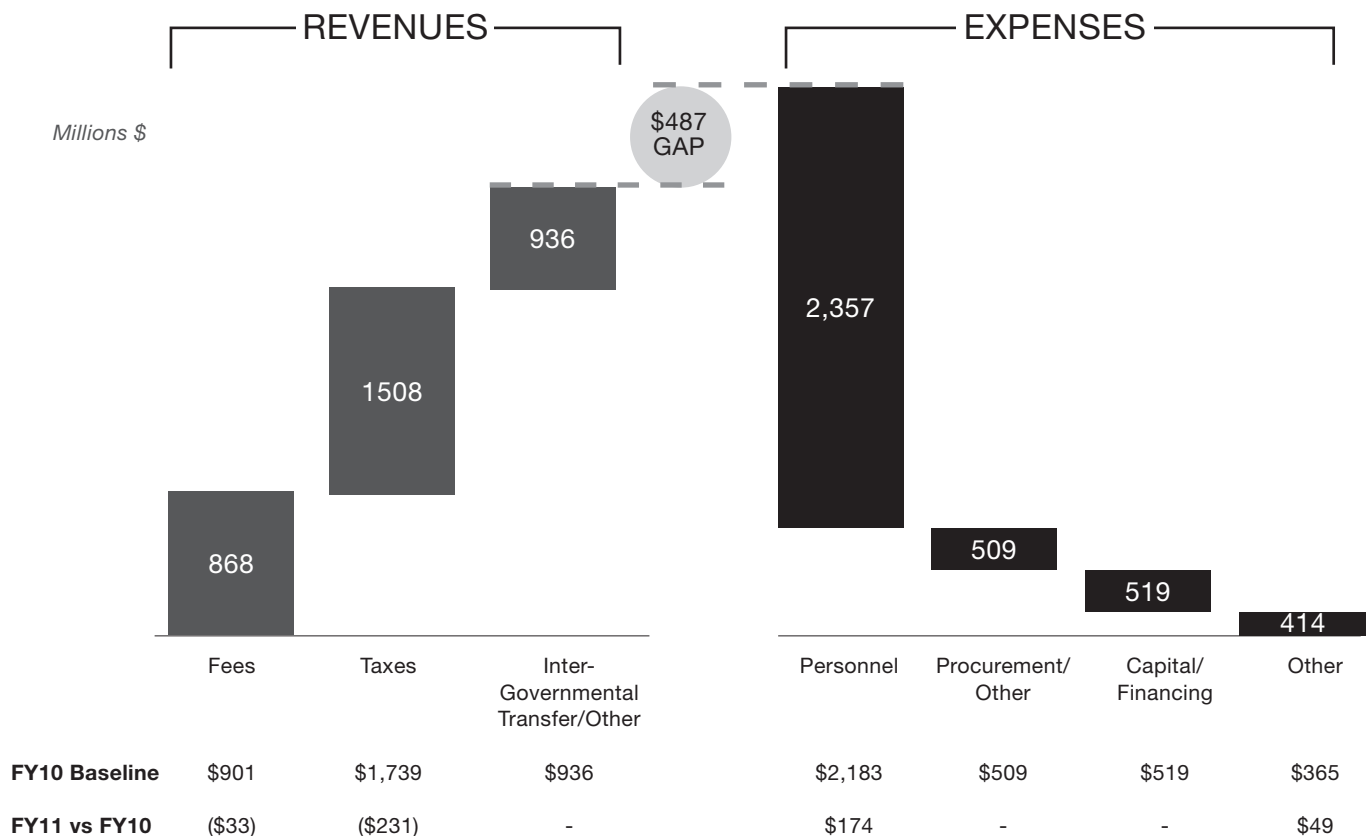
NOTE ON THE COOK COUNTY BUDGET

The Board President is tasked with submitting a budget that must be passed by the last day of February for the fiscal year that began December 1, 2010. This timing gives the incoming Board President only a few weeks to present a budget after she takes office.

Based off interviews with County representatives and independent analysis conducted by private and public sector experts, the transition team has estimated that Cook County is faced with a FY 2011 budget gap of approximately \$487 million. This gap impacts the entire County, challenging all elected officials to find 21 percent savings in the three-quarters of the fiscal year that would remain after the budget is passed (16 percent annualized).

The importance of collaboration in this budget process cannot be emphasized enough. The initiatives outlined in this report offer recommendations on steps the Board President can take to make the County more fiscally responsible starting with her own office, but hinge on cooperation from all elected officials. By working together, elected officials can present Cook County citizens with a balanced budget that does not reduce the quality of service, while laying the groundwork to repeal the rest of the sales tax increase in the near future.

Please refer to the chart below for more information about the FY 2011 budget gap.



Sources: Cook County budget documents, interviews with staff employees and outside advisors

MAJOR INITIATIVES TO TRANSFORM COOK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

1. **Impose a moratorium on non-essential capital projects and service contracts; rationalize projects.**

\$

What is the idea?

Expensive, non-strategic, long-term contracts in areas like technology and capital equipment have often produced questionable results. Significant capital projects are underway without a long-term capital plan, and contractual professional services cost roughly \$300 million annually. In the immediate term, President Preckwinkle will impose a moratorium on non-essential capital projects and service contracts. Longer term, the administration will continue to provide goals and incentives to rationalize projects, eliminating non-essential projects and determining case by case which services should be contracted out and which can be delivered as effectively but at a lower cost by County employees.

What is the impact?

The moratorium will save an estimated tens of millions of dollars annually in County capital and operating funds. It will offload bad contracts and lay groundwork for a more strategic approach to capital and professional services spending.

What should you look for?

The President will announce the moratorium for the President's office and encourage elected officials across the County to adopt near-term moratorium and share an approach to rationalize projects.

2. **Completely repeal the sales tax increase by FY 2013.**

\$

What is the idea?

The County sales tax increase raised tax rates on consumer goods in Cook County to the highest levels in the country. Adopted without any plan or constraints on the use of additional tax revenues, this tax increase enabled continued inefficient operation of County government. Repealing the sales tax increase will relieve County residents and businesses from this tax burden. Specifically, the FY 2011 budget will include a commitment to reduce the sales tax by 0.25% in FY 2012 and 0.25% in FY 2013.

What is the impact?

Reducing the tax will lift a burden on economic development and commerce in Cook County. As the sales tax is regressive, its repeal would benefit low-income individuals the most. The conse-

quent reduction in revenues estimated at \$200 million per year would require County government to achieve greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

What should you look for?

With the FY 2011 budget recommendations, the President will submit to the Cook County Board a proposal to return the County's home rule sales tax rate to 0.75% through sales tax cuts in FY 2012 and FY 2013.

3. Improve budgeting with long-term financial planning, capital strategy, and greater transparency.



What is the idea?

The County plans each operating and capital budget year by year, without long-term projections, and passes the budget after the fiscal year has started. Budget preparation for FY 2012 will begin immediately after the current year's budget is approved. Expenditures will be tied to service levels, and public budget documents will report key performance indicators. Preparation will include long-term revenue and expenditure projections, aiming to manage financial risks effectively. Capital projects will be prioritized. The County will review its capital structure, looking at lease/own options, establishing capital reserves, and determining optimal use of long-term bonds.

What is the impact?

Inadequate planning has led the County to make short-term financial decisions rather than maximizing its long-term investments in improving public services. Long-term financial planning—and concomitant changes to the budget process—would enable better resource allocation (rather than operating the County in a continuing state of budget emergency). These initiatives would also enable better performance management and improved transparency to the public by tying taxpayer dollars to performance and service delivery.

What should you look for?

The President will begin preparation for the FY 2012 budget immediately after the FY 2011 budget has been adopted. This and future budgets will be prepared in a transparent fashion, collaborating with other elected officials, and will recommend a budget in time for the Board to adopt it before the fiscal year begins.

4. Establish a new performance management culture.



What is the idea?

While County operations cost the taxpayer billions in annual taxes, the results of these expendi-

tures is not very clear. To explain the impact of taxpayer investments and to improve the efficiency of County operation, the President will create a new position of Chief Performance Officer and will hold regular cross-County executive review sessions to identify and resolve issues inhibiting higher productivity. All County functions will be included, and the President will actively seek the collaboration of other elected officials to improve service and lower costs. The President will seek innovative and effective ideas from other governments and from the private sector, such as a “performance bank” through which departments generating performance-enhancing ideas would be credited in future budget decisions.

What is the impact?

Creating a culture of performance management will completely modernize and improve County operations. Increased productivity will help keep taxes lower in the long run. In critical areas such as Health Systems and Criminal Justice, performance management will help deliver better quality services.

What should you look for?

The President will announce the appointment of the new Chief Performance Officer. The FY 2012 budget will include performance indicators that are communicated to the public. In the long run, the quality of public services will be better.

5. Streamline management structure, focusing on the right talent for the right job.



What is the idea?

In numerous County departments there is a disproportionately high number of managers to staff, resulting in higher personnel costs and higher taxes. Multiple layers of management slow down decision-making. Benchmarking each area of service appropriately, whether to the private sector or to other governments, will help the County determine the most efficient ratios of direct reports to supervisors for each unit. Improving technology will enable more efficient management. Throughout, the focus will be on the right talent for the right job, with commensurate compensation.

What is the impact?

Streamlined management will save a significant amount of unnecessary personnel costs and improve effectiveness of services delivered to the public.

What should you look for?

The President will announce the results of the effort as it is implemented. The FY 2012 budget will include reduced headcount.

6. Share services across County agencies, for both back-office and front-office functions.



What is the idea?

Most County departments run nearly independent back-office functions, which in many cases are redundant. For example, procurement and information technology are handled separately by multiple elected officials. This replication wastes taxpayer dollars. It reduces the quality of County services by diverting management time away from their primary responsibility: frontline services to taxpayers. Centralizing certain administrative functions, such as procurement, information technology, and payroll, has the potential both to increase quality of the service (e.g., procurement turnaround time) and lower costs County-wide. The shared services effort will include reevaluating the County's Enterprise Resource Planning system. The effort will also create a central intergovernmental affairs function for a proactive and coordinated approach to pending State and Federal legislation. Where services could be delivered more effectively, certain front-office functions might also be shared between elected officials.

What is the impact?

Significant savings of taxpayer dollars will result from eliminating duplication, accessing economies of scale, and establishing consistent standards. A common intergovernmental affairs function could advocate more effectively for County residents' needs.

What should you look for?

The President will announce a shared services initiative and will work collaboratively with elected officials across the County. The new shared intergovernmental affairs function will promote State and Federal legislation in line with the needs of Cook County residents and businesses.

7. Undertake a desk and compensation audit.



What is the idea?

Lack of accountability has allowed actual job duties to drift away from what staff were hired to do and for obsolete activities to continue. In addition, compensation is not always in line with the actual job duties or employees' skills, qualifications and responsibilities. The President will undertake an audit to review the duties of each employee in the President's purview and revise job descriptions and compensation according to actual activities performed and market benchmarks. Other elected officials will be invited to follow the President's example. Unnecessary activities will be eliminated. Staff will be reallocated to understaffed functions, such as, potentially, the County's internal audit function which fights fraud and corruption.

What is the impact?

Rationalizing activities and compensation of County employees will generate significant savings. Wasteful spending will be eliminated. Better aligning skills and qualifications of employees with their responsibilities will improve effectiveness and morale.

What should you look for?

The President will announce a hiring and compensation freeze on all non-essential positions and the launch of the desk audit for departments within the President's office. Other elected officials will be requested to conduct desk audits following this example. The President will work with the Health and Hospitals System Board to explore a compensation audit for the System.

8. Reduce procurement costs through strategic sourcing.*What is the idea?*

Standard items, such as desktop computers, are often purchased separately by each elected official. Pooling the purchasing power of all the elected officials will enable the County to renegotiate with vendors for more favorable prices. The President will appoint a purchasing team to identify immediate opportunities for cost saving. Over time, the team will improve the purchasing process, help to build a more responsive and effective purchasing function, and improve relations with vendors. In addition, opportunities may exist to participate in purchasing agreements with other municipalities.

What is the impact?

Cost-effective and quicker purchasing of strategic items will save taxpayers millions of dollars in the first year. Strategic sourcing will lead to long-term cost reduction and better purchasing decisions.

What should you look for?

The President will assign a purchasing team and launch a collaborative strategic purchasing effort for all County elected officials as well as look for partnerships with the City of Chicago, State of Illinois and other forms of government.

9. Lead economic development efforts through a new Bureau of Economic Development.*What is the idea?*

The recession affects residents and businesses across the County. To promote economic development, the President will consolidate several departments into a new Bureau of Economic Development. The Bureau will identify and remove barriers to business development and work to attract

new businesses. Coordinating with not-for-profit agencies and other governmental entities, such as the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois and the Federal Government, the Bureau will attract and grant funds and promote workforce development.

What is the impact?

The Bureau of Economic Development (BED) will make it easier for businesses to thrive in Cook County. The BED will provide a common strategy across all County resources for business, economic and workforce development in this region

What should you look for?

The President will announce a new Director of the Bureau of Economic Development and task that person with immediately reorganizing the County's workforce development programs, reviewing the funding of a foreclosure mediation program, revising the Neighborhood Stabilization Programs and implementing a targeted Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

10. Improve efficiency of the criminal justice system.



What is the idea?

The Cook County criminal justice system is composed of a series of disparate offices, resulting in inefficiencies. For example, a defendant in Cook County waits an average of 189 days to go to trial and can wait as long as five years. Some defendants spend more time in jail awaiting trial than they would have spent in prison were they convicted, an unfair outcome that is costly to County taxpayers. To address this challenge, the President will work with other elected officials to integrate the justice system, with improved IT and processes across elected officials, diversion programs and alternative sentencing programs. The County will promote building the capacity of nonprofits and community-based organizations to expand correctional education, substance abuse, and mental health programs.

What is the impact?

The average cost of detaining an individual in Cook County Jail is \$117 per day. With more than 90,000 detainees per year, even a small improvement of wait time would generate millions in savings. More importantly, expanding correctional education and re-entry programs will affect the lives of tens of thousands of residents and their families.

What should you look for?

The President will announce a committee representing various communities and criminal justice functions to review current inefficiencies and recommend ways to manage criminal justice more effectively, such as diversion and alternative sentencing strategies.

100 DAY INITIATIVES

11. Engage in pending labor negotiations, seeking equitable contracts consistent with fiscal realities.



What is the idea?

Personnel spending drives the County's budget, accounting for two thirds of total costs. The outcome of recent wage arbitrations may drive more than a third of the County's FY 2011 budget gap. The President would take a leadership role in successfully concluding negotiations with organized labor group to achieve equitable labor contracts that are consistent with the County's fiscal realities.

What is the impact?

Negotiation of collective bargaining agreements presents an opportunity to renew the County's relationship with organized labor groups and begin to address the County's chronic structural deficit.

What should you look for?

The President will open discussions with organized labor leaders to develop a collaborative approach. Cooperation from the Health Systems Board of Directors and from all other County elected officials will be necessary.

12. Take advantage of new pension rules by deferring the hire of non-critical senior staff.



What is the idea?

In 2009, the Cook County pension fund had \$4.6 billion in unfunded liabilities. Recent legislation decreases pension obligations for many public employees hired after January 1, 2011, including by increasing retirement age and capping final average salary. Given the precarious state of the Cook County pension fund, the President will defer appointing non-critical senior staff until January 2011.

What is the impact?

New staff members' pensions will be more affordable for the County, demonstrating the President's leadership and commitment to put the taxpayer first.

What should you look for?

All but critical senior staff (e.g., budget/finance, IT, administration, policy, etc.) in the President's office will be appointed in the new year.

13. Restructure County debt.*What is the idea?*

The County's long-term debt portfolio can be restructured allowing funds in the near term to be allocated to immediate priorities—helping to close the budget gap and putting the County on track to achieve long-term savings.

What is the impact?

Deferring principal payments will reduce immediate debt service payments by tens of millions of dollars, thus allowing the County time to absorb the impact of cutting the sales tax before paying down its debt obligations.

What should you look for?

The Cook County Board will receive recommendations for refinancing County's long-term debt, including the long-term implications of the strategy recommended by the President.

14. Provide comprehensive review of and limit overtime spending.*What is the idea?*

The County spends significant amounts on overtime pay—\$63 million in 2009 counting only payments to employees who accrued at least 10% more than their salaries in overtime pay. Overtime spending is not managed, and abuse of overtime policies feeds a public image of overpaid County employees squandering taxpayer dollars. The President will freeze overtime spending in the near-term. After reviewing relevant benchmarks, the President will work with other elected officials to manage overtime spending through a new data- and technology-driven accountability structure.

What is the impact?

Improving overtime practices will save the County millions of dollars annually. It will also show that the County is taking an approach consistent with the austerity measures the economic downturn has required of working families across the country.

What should you look for?

The President will review current overtime costs and lead a collaborative approach with all elected officials to develop a County-wide overtime policy and accountability structure.

15. Audit benefits provided to employees.



What is the idea?

The President will review healthcare and other benefits (including perquisites such as County cell phones and vehicles) to ensure County taxpayer dollars are funding appropriate benefit levels as compared to relevant benchmarks, and to ensure dependent benefits are being extended correctly.

What is the impact?

The benefits audit will save taxpayer dollars and improve accountability. A similar audit saved the City of Chicago more than \$14 million, more than twice the expected savings.

What should you look for?

The President will audit benefits for staff reporting to her. Cooperation across elected officials will be necessary to successfully implement a County-wide audit that maximizes this opportunity.

16. Establish a Pensions Sub-Committee to design and implement pension reform.



What is the idea?

The Cook County pension fund has accrued unfunded actuarial liabilities of \$4.6 billion. It is fiscally prudent—and necessary—to make pension reforms. The President will establish a subcommittee of the Finance Committee dedicated to identifying and implementing substantial pension reforms.

What is the impact?

Reforming pensions will help avoid future tax increases and service cuts that inaction today would necessitate. Undertaking reform will demonstrate the County's leadership in addressing difficult challenges before a crisis necessitates emergency measures.

What should you look for?

The President will work with the Cook County Board establish a Sub-Committee on pension reform under Finance Committee.

17. Audit real estate holdings and adopt a portfolio approach to property management.



What is the idea?

The County owns and leases many buildings and parcels of real estate. To determine the full inventory, an audit is required. Adopting a portfolio management approach will reduce the cost of managing the County's large property holdings and will align real estate holdings with the County's strategic objectives.

What is the impact?

Portfolio property management will reduce the annual cost of occupying office and warehouse spaces and will enable the County and residents to make the best use of all assets that are needed.

What should you look for?

The President will announce a new asset management executive with significant experience in managing asset portfolios.

18. Centralize fleet management.



What is the idea?

Multiple County agencies purchase vehicles through varying processes and maintain these vehicles through disparate service centers. Centralizing fleet management will help the County to buy smart, operate and maintain smart, and sell smart when vehicles are no longer needed. This will thus reduce the cost of managing large, specialized vehicle fleets.

What is the impact?

Centralized fleet management will lower vehicle costs by optimizing inventory, improving utilization and making operations and maintenance more efficient. Shared purchasing will allow the County to obtain volume discounts, optimize vehicle specifications and select the best financing.

What should you look for?

The President will seek cooperation across elected County officials to propose a new fleet purchasing and management plan.

19. Investigate ending tax subsidy to unincorporated areas.



What is the idea?

Most Cook County citizens pay city taxes for municipal services such as zoning regulation. However, residents in the unincorporated areas of Cook County obtain these services from the County without paying the differential cost. County government will recover from residents in unincorporated areas the actual cost of services provided only to these areas.

What is the impact?

Cook County residents subsidize tens of millions of dollars of services per year to unincorporated areas. Recovering these costs will improve the County's fiscal health and more equitably distribute the costs of services.

What should you look for?

The President, in collaboration with the Treasurer, will present a suitable proposal to the County Board to reclassify currently unincorporated areas or establish service fees.

20. Explore enhancing revenues by securing grant funding and providing fee-based services to other jurisdictions.



What is the idea?

County government obtains a disproportionately low share of Federal, State and private funding. The President will create an efficient structure to apply for and implement grants and meet grant requirements. As an additional source of revenue, the County could recover costs of services it currently provides to other municipalities and taxing districts (for example detective services or tax collection) and provide additional services for suitable fees, such as administrative functions.

What is the impact?

Grants will provide significantly more funding for core healthcare, economic development and criminal justice services. Meeting grant requirements will also improve the County's professionalism and transparency.

What should you look for?

The President will compete against other regions of the country for grant funds and will periodically announce new grants secured. The President will work with the Treasurer to study the opportunity for providing fee-based services to other municipalities and will make recommendations to the Cook County Board.

21. Improve energy efficiency by greening County buildings.



What is the idea?

The President will ask the Facilities Department and Forest Preserve District leadership to review energy use of County buildings and make infrastructure and behavioral changes to reduce County energy costs over the long-term. The County will seek partnerships with the private sector to adopt innovative, sustainable practices.

What is the impact?

A greener County will reflect the values of its residents and will generate long-term savings by reducing energy costs.

What should you look for?

The President will announce partnerships to promote green County buildings and operations.

22. Promote public-private partnerships to address the County's critical challenges.



What is the idea?

The President will seek out partnerships with the business, not-for-profit, and philanthropic communities on key priorities for County transformation. Pro bono and foundation partners will increase the County's capacity to be more efficient and innovative. Leveraging the civic commitment and goodwill of Cook County's private and non-profit sectors will increase transparency and professionalism and ultimately provide better services to residents.

What is the impact?

Innovative and proven ideas will be adopted by County government. The pool of talent to solve County challenges will be expanded to include the pro bono expertise of businesses, the community insights of not-for-profits, and the experience of foundations.

What should you look for?

The President has already secured pro bono support for this transition plan. As new opportunities arise, businesses and civic organizations will be invited to participate pro bono. The President will announce further public-private partnerships to improve Cook County government.

23. Make budget information publicly accessible and budget decisions more transparent.



What is the idea?

The County currently does not make budget information easily accessible to the public. In recent years, budgets have not been adopted until well into the fiscal year and audited financials have not been produced in a timely fashion. Going forward, the County will make more useful financial information available to the public sooner, including transparently reporting on impact of benefit enhancements on pension funds and hidden expenses of County departments such as liability costs or Hospital System bond and interest expenses. The President's office will gather expenditure schedules on a regular basis prior to year end reporting as a performance management tool and to improve speed of year end reporting.

What is the impact?

A public that understands the budget can hold County officials accountable for use of taxpayer dollars. Transparency helps build trust between County government and taxpayers and results in better management of public resources.

What should you look for?

The President will make regular announcements about the FY 2011 budget process, including town hall-style discussions and meetings with newspaper editorial boards. The FY 2012 budget process will begin shortly thereafter, to recommend and pass a budget before the beginning of that fiscal year.

24. Publish cross-County purchasing information.



What is the idea?

The County will publish up to date, easily accessible information on bids and purchasing contracts across the County, including vendor information, goods and services purchased, and contract terms.

What is the impact?

Taxpayers will be able to find out where their taxes are going, including which vendors are receiving contracts and what the terms are. This will help eliminate fraud and waste.

What should you look for?

The President will seek cooperation across County elected officials to launch an innovative, new County purchasing website with easy to access information on how taxpayer dollars are spent.

25. Build capacity of minority-owned and women-owned businesses.



What is the idea?

The County can play a more active role in helping build minority-owned and women-owned businesses, particularly as it relates to capacity building and job creation. The current MBE/WBE program at the County can be improved upon by expanding the amount of procurement spend that is tracked and focusing on metrics around capacity building and job creation within these businesses instead of simply speaking to amounts contracted out to these firms.

What is the impact?

MBE/WBEs will see increased engagement from the County and be provided resources that will help see their businesses grow. This initiative will help create jobs across the County while increasing the County's economic growth.

What should you look for?

The MBE/WBE program will be renewed to ensure compliance across the County with stated program goals. The President will establish partnerships with established non-profit agencies that focus on capacity building and job creation for MBE/WBEs.

26. Enter into strategic partnerships to improve the Health System.



What is the idea?

To deliver the quality healthcare services County residents require, the Health System's mission includes developing service partnerships where it is inefficient to provide services directly. The President will take an active role in assisting the Health System to connect with potential strategic partners. This includes large institutions and Federally Qualified Health Centers. Partnership goals will include extending primary care and providing specialty care.

What is the impact?

Expanded access to care for the most vulnerable County residents, provided more efficiently than if the County attempted to expand services directly. Longer term, healthcare partnerships will minimize the System's financial burden while ensuring that all County residents have access to the care they need.

What should you look for?

The President will work with the Health and Hospital System to identify and prioritize a list of strategic partnerships to pursue in concert with the Health System's Strategic Plan. Once identified, the President will play a key role in building relationships with these partners.

27. Use standardized risk assessments in the criminal justice system.



What is the idea?

In the criminal justice system, risk and needs assessments ensure that the individuals who are most likely to reoffend are kept away from the public. Assessments also ensure that those who are least likely to reoffend are not incarcerated at great expense. Despite the fact that risk is assessed at many points throughout the system, assessment is not standardized, there is no guarantee that the information is easily accessible to everyone who needs it, and efforts are often redundant and inconsistent. Risk and needs assessment information should be made easily accessible to everyone who needs it and should follow individuals through the system.

What is the impact?

Accurate and timely information should be available at key decision making points, including pre-trial decision making, jail admission and security classification, sentencing, and probation, allowing the needs of the individual to be more fully understood and addressed at each step in the process.

What should you look for?

The President will ensure that all relevant parties are sharing the data. Risk assessment information will be accessible in an automated database available to all relevant agencies. The President will also work with the probation office and the Sheriff to create a standardized risk assessment process.

28. Enhance Forest Preserve youth education initiative.



What is the idea?

Opportunities exist for the Forest Preserve to engage youth, particularly urban youth, in classroom and outdoor learning and activities. Launching a youth education program requires reassigning staff and leadership and setting targets for outreach and participation.

What is the impact?

Engage youth in the values of energy conservation, open space, and outdoor activities.

What should you look for?

Increased educational programming beginning in Summer 2011 and with the 2011-2012 school year at Forest Preserve locations as well as the Brookfield Zoo and the Botanic Gardens.

29. Improve public enjoyment of the Forest Preserve through volunteer groups, special events and a new foundation.



What is the idea?

Establishing and deepening relationships with supporters of the Forest Preserve will enable the County to secure new resources to improve the Forest Preserve. Volunteer groups will enhance staff efforts to provide additional programming and services.

What is the impact?

Through better outreach, a structured volunteer programs and the assignment of dedicated staff — including a volunteer manager — the Forest Preserve District can better meet its mission to link Cook County residents with Forest Preserve resources.

What should you look for?

Public involvement will help generate contributions from established stakeholders. A forest preserve foundation will be created.

FIRST TERM INITIATIVES

30. Formalize County personnel plan.



What is the idea?

The County's current personnel management processes have fostered a perception that County hiring and disciplinary decisions are inconsistent and based on personal and political relationships. The President will develop a formal personnel plan for County government that reflects best practices in hiring and managing talent and emphasizes fairness. The President will work with the County's Shakman Compliance Administrator to ensure that the plan complies with the letter and spirit of the County's consent decrees. The effort would include updating job descriptions and addressing practices such as "advance-step" hiring and "position reclassification" that are inconsistent and make it difficult to anticipate actual personnel costs. As part of the talent management plan, the President will spearhead a continuing education initiative that trains County employees with the skills they need to deliver high quality services.

What is the impact?

A transparent and meritocratic process will attract and retain high quality talent in County government, improving efficiency and quality of services to citizens.

What should you look for?

Job openings will be published on line, and you will be able to apply for jobs online, which the President has already launched on her transition website. Appointments will be published in a timely fashion. Publication of appointments will occur as soon as is reasonably possible. The President will work with the Shakman Compliance Administrator and presiding Judge to ensure personnel plans meet federal requirements. Leadership of other elected officials will be necessary to develop and implement such a personnel plan outside of the President's office.

31. Improve collections management, including delinquent property taxes.



What is the idea?

The County can generate additional operating funds by improving cigarette tax compliance and charging higher near-term penalties for delinquent property taxes. The model of immediate high penalties for delinquent property taxes, rather than charging lower penalties over a longer period, has been used successfully by other states. Automated tax return processing would also improve tax collections.

What is the impact?

Cigarette tax revenue has declined by over 50% in the last five years and improving compliance would address this downward trend. A delinquent property tax penalty of 10% assessed one month

after taxes are due is consistent with other states' models and is estimated to generate millions annually in County operating funds, benefiting citizens who pay taxes on time. Automated processing of tax bills, payments and late notices will increase efficiency and reduce the cost of collections.

What should you look for?

The President will work with the Treasurer to make a proposal to the Cook County Board for improving tax collections.

32. Update County fee structures to account for value of services, inflation and benchmarks; monetize the County's assets.



What is the idea?

County government can generate non-tax revenues by optimizing fee levels, for example license or court fees. Updated fees should reflect value of services, take into account benchmarks from other major counties, and include an inflation adjustment. County government can in addition charge convenience fees and charge fees to access information stored by the County, particularly information used for commercial purposes.

What is the impact?

More equitable fee structures will generate significant annual revenues, helping to close the County's budget gap in the near term and enabling improvement—rather than reductions—in vital County services.

What should you look for?

The President will seek a collaborative approach with other elected officials to assess fee structures and the impact on constituents of potential changes.

33. Increase accountability for risk management.



What is the idea?

The County recently settled a \$55 million lawsuit against the jails, which will necessitate a significant payout of taxpayer dollars. The County can manage risk better by taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to risk management. The President will lead an initiative to assess the County's self-insurance program and explore insurance alternatives. The President will improve alignment of incentives by allocating risk management funds to each County department to manage, rather than paying all liabilities from a common self-insurance fund, ensuring that departments that manage risk well see benefit for their efforts.

What is the impact?

Increased accountability will prevent avoidable large payouts of taxpayer dollars. Implementing a risk management strategy to change the County's haphazard approach to risk is important for the County's fiscal soundness in the long term.

What should you look for?

The President will appoint an executive with experience in risk management.

34. Identify ideal structure for and membership of the Health System Board of Directors.*What is the idea?*

The Cook County Health and Hospitals System Board of Directors provides the expertise and experience necessary to run an effective and modern health system for County residents. . To make this possible, the President will finalize the Board's governance structure, including criteria for composition of the Board, term limits and the process for electing new Board members.

What is the impact?

Proper governance structure will enable a well-functioning Board to lead with the necessary expertise a transformation of Cook County's healthcare services to its residents.

What should you look for?

The President will propose to the Cook County Board updating the Ordinance establishing the Health Systems Board.

35. Expand electronic monitoring for low-risk, non-violent offenders who cannot afford to pay bail.*What is the idea?*

Cook County spends millions of taxpayer dollars to detain low-risk, non-violent individuals where the County's main objective is to ensure they appear at court hearings. Many detainees do not pose a threat to their communities, but spend the lengthy wait until trial in jail because they cannot afford bail. The County should permit these low-risk, non-violent offenders to remain in their communities and use mechanisms such as electronic monitoring or personal recognizance bonds (I-Bonds) to ensure that they appear at court hearings. This will require the County to eliminate Duran Consent Decree limitations on electronic monitoring.

What is the impact?

Allowing individuals to participate in their communities and in the workforce rather than awaiting trial in jail will generate positive social and economic outcomes. Detaining fewer non-violent offenders will produce significant saving of taxpayer dollars.

What should you look for?

The President will work with criminal justice officials during her first 100 days in office to review the current pre-trial release process and analyze options for improvement. Thereafter, the President will advocate for the expanded use of pretrial release measures that have proven safe and effective.

36. Explore transferring Forest Preserve policing to the Sheriff.*What is the idea?*

The Forest Preserve District operates a law enforcement division of more than 100 patrol officers that is separate from the Cook County Sheriff's police. The Forest Preserve District could utilize part-time or off-duty officers from the Sheriff's department or transfer policing duties to the Sheriff or another municipal police force to achieve its safety objectives more efficiently.

What is the impact?

A transfer of policing responsibilities would save taxpayer dollars and improve efficiency of public safety services delivered within the Forest Preserve.

What should you look for?

The President will work with the Forest Preserve District to assess and identify the best option for policing Forest Preserve land.

37. Government 2.0—Develop a robust information technology architecture for County government and move more services online to improve constituents' experience.*What is the idea?*

County government hosts a multitude of information systems and websites. It is difficult for citizens to find the information they need and few County services are offered online. The President will update the County's information technology architecture, creating a robust system for cross-County collaboration. The President will work with the information technology department to offer easy-to-access online County government services—the modern face of County government.

What is the impact?

A platform for the modern, collaborative County government. County residents can access services online when they need them, with greater automation.

What should you look for?

Better functioning County government. The President will expand web based services, affording residents and businesses greater convenience in transacting business with the County.