

#NOCOPACADEMY THE REPORT



**“I THINK THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION
THAT THE CAMPAIGN IS BEGGING THE CITY TO ASK IS:**

**DOES POLICE SPENDING REDUCE HARM,
OR CAUSE GREATER HARM? ARE WE WILLING
TO ADDRESS VIOLENCE BY INVESTING IN THINGS
LIKE MENTAL HEALTH, EDUCATION, JOBS,
HOUSING...THINGS THAT CAN ACTUALLY CUT BACK
ON THE TRAUMA, POVERTY AND PAIN THAT OFTEN
LEADS TO VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES?”**

**BENJI HART,
CHICAGO BTGNC COLLECTIVE ¹**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	4
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	5
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THE ONGOING CRISIS.....	6
-------------------------	---

THE SURVEY.....	7
-----------------	---

THE #NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN.....	11
---------------------------------	----

Youth Directed, Adult Supported
Art & Cultural Work from the go!
Using the Media & Making Our Own
Action Timeline
Engaging City Council

PROBLEMS WITH THE CITY'S PROCESS.....	21
---------------------------------------	----

City Council & “Aldermanic Prerogative”
Chicago Infrastructure Trust
Planned Manufacturing Districts

UNPACKING RAHM EMANUEL'S RHETORIC.....	23
--	----

CLOSING.....	26
--------------	----

SURVEY METHODS.....	27
---------------------	----

CREDITS.....	28
--------------	----



PREFACE

No Cop Academy is about more than resisting a new training facility for CPD. The young Black people driving this campaign offer a vision and are asserting their demand for real community safety. These young people understand that money spent on policing comes at the expense of investment in their future. They are making the connections between gun violence, school closings, lack of mental health care, and the failures of policing. They are demanding real safety — a Chicago where communities have the resources they need and young Black people survive and thrive. These young people have a sophisticated analysis, but have framed the campaign in an accessible way that has drawn widespread support. People are coming together across communities, across all forms of social location--class, race, gender, age--to say, 'No, we don't want this. This is not going to make us safe. Further, the fact that our communities are divested from is what's making our communities unsafe.'

Not only are these young people and their adult allies lifting up an alternative vision, they are calling out the Mayor's office and City Council's maneuverings to silence and exclude meaningful input from West Side residents and all those impacted by police violence across the city. There's been a bypass of the actual community, and of the input of young people of color, in order to ram something through that the Mayor and Chicago Police Department have decided that they want for their own reasons. #NoCopAcademy's efforts to uncover the actual planning and decision-making process behind the proposed Cop Academy reveal the failures of Chicago to have a transparent government. During the one occasion the proposal was discussed by residents and Aldermen at City Council, Mayor Emanuel literally and metaphorically turned his back on young Black people during their turn at the mic. Young people are rising up, demanding their voices be heard and ideas be taken seriously, while exposing the corruption and gross manipulation of democracy of the Mayor and his allies in order to expand policing in Chicago.

The ultimate question has to be, if there's \$95 million for a Cop Academy, why isn't there \$95 million--at least, or triple that amount--for the schools in the community? Why isn't there a \$95 million dollar Laquan McDonald Wellness Space? These are questions that all of us need to be asking. That is why everyone should support this campaign — this has always been about more than a building. This is about how we have failed our city's young people. This is about youth leadership. This is about demanding resources for youth & communities, and rejecting the notion that the city is "broke," when resources always materialize for policing.

It's a larger question that faces all of us everywhere. What do we need for our communities' true wellbeing? We have to trouble the concept that "safety equals policing." Part of what this campaign is saying is that community wellness means something else--something different. That's what these young people are fighting for, and we should all be supporting them. #NoCopAcademy is a powerful rallying cry and a basis from which we can build toward abolition.

MARIAME KABA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We found that West Garfield Park residents overwhelmingly do not want a Cop Academy built in their neighborhood and, instead, would like to see public resources devoted to services that do not involve the Chicago Police Department, such as education and youth programs. This winter, our team of volunteers surveyed 500 West Garfield Park residents. We found that:

- **72%** had never heard about the Cop Academy until approached by one of our canvassers.
- **72%** said they do not want the Cop Academy built in their neighborhood, and a further 10% either declined to respond or said they needed more information.
- **86%** said they do not believe the Cop Academy is the best use of \$95 million on the West Side.
- **95%** recommended that the city invest in something else--beyond the Chicago Police Department.
- In total, we collected **1,103** community recommendations for West Side investments in public health and safety. **None of those recommendations included the Cop Academy**, and nearly 50% prioritized youth & school spending.

In just over six months, the #NoCopAcademy campaign has used innovative strategies to conduct grassroots research, as well as build visibility, intergenerational power, and youth leadership. In contrast, Mayor Rahm Emanuel has pushed forward the Cop Academy as a “development” project with little to no opportunities for community input, by design. We believe our organizing is a critical defense against an initiative that undermines public wellness and self-determination in West Garfield Park and across Chicago:

- Aldermen seek to wield control over their own wards, yet this approach falls short when decisions in a particular locale impact the entire city. In the case of the Cop Academy, **Aldermanic prerogative** is allowing lawmakers to override constituents’ demands citywide.
- The **Chicago Infrastructure Trust**, a semi-private entity overseeing the Cop Academy development, lacks the most basic oversight and accountability to the broader public.
- **Planned Manufacturing Districts**, such as the site of the proposed Cop Academy, streamline projects in industrial corridors, and intentionally remove community needs from the equation to the benefit of corporations, despite their proximity to residences.

Rahm Emanuel has sought to justify investment in this massive infrastructure project by claiming the Cop Academy benefits West Garfield Park residents and constitutes a solution to the rampant police violence he oversees. Yet, these talking points do not hold water. The Department of Justice Report’s scathing critique of Chicago Police Department violence should not be used to justify funneling more resources into a proven violent institution. Furthermore, “better” police training will not end police violence, and neither will a new building.

West Garfield Park deserves meaningful, robust, community-driven economic development, not the mere 100 temporary construction jobs the Cop Academy promises.

Based on grassroots, community-driven research, this report serves as a corrective to the mayor’s misinformation campaign.

THE ONGOING CRISIS

A Chicago Police officer shot 16 bullets into 17 year old Laquan McDonald on October 20, 2014. It was covered up by other officers, the State's Attorney, and even Mayor Emanuel, in order to secure his re-election bid. But that was neither the beginning nor the end of the West Side teen's story for those of us committed to Black liberation in Chicago. This city failed Laquan repeatedly, from instances of severe abuse in foster homes, to his lack of quality treatment for years of trauma, and experiences in under-performing schools that failed to support his learning needs². Justice for Laquan means so much more than locking up Jason Van Dyke, the officer that killed him.

Chicago has repeatedly shown its preference for systems of oppression when it comes to young Black people. For instance, Chicago spends \$4 million dollars a day on policing³. That number is especially shocking when compared to Rahm Emanuel's decision to close 6 mental health clinics in 2012, which only needed 2.2 million dollars to remain open⁴. That \$4 million dollars per day does not include the \$642 million spent on police misconduct settlements over 12 years⁵. Because of the alignment Rahm Emanuel and City Council have made with the police, youth services, especially for young Black people, have suffered severely from a lack of funding. We saw this when the city decided to close 54 schools in 2013 and 88 percent of the students affected were Black⁶. And the latest school closings in February of this year were all in Englewood, a Black neighborhood.

School closures destabilize communities. Youth are forced into schools across gang lines, possibly putting them in dangerous situations. Black youth have not only lost their places of education, but also their after school programs, vital parts of many youth's lives by providing tutoring, jobs, and child care to thousands of youth across the city. Resources like these are what help prevent violence — we need to be investing in these, not gutting them.

When the City says they are closing schools to save money, one must realize that the city saved only approximately \$35 million from the 2013 school closings⁷, less than half of the proposed cost of the police academy. CPS administrators have claimed that school closings provide better student-to-teacher ratios and are needed to get children out of underperforming schools. This rationale completely misses the fact that investing in underperforming schools, could make substantial change. But this would mean that Rahm Emanuel and the city would have to care about the future of Black youth in Chicago.

This city has taken enough from Black youth. It is time to invest in the systems to empower them, not systems that will continue to oppress them. We demand that the city invests in resources that will provide real community safety, not a police academy.

THIS CITY HAS TAKEN ENOUGH FROM BLACK YOUTH. IT IS TIME TO INVEST IN THE SYSTEMS TO EMPOWER THEM, NOT SYSTEMS THAT WILL CONTINUE TO OPPRESS THEM. WE DEMAND THAT THE CITY INVESTS IN RESOURCES THAT WILL PROVIDE REAL COMMUNITY SAFETY, NOT A POLICE ACADEMY.

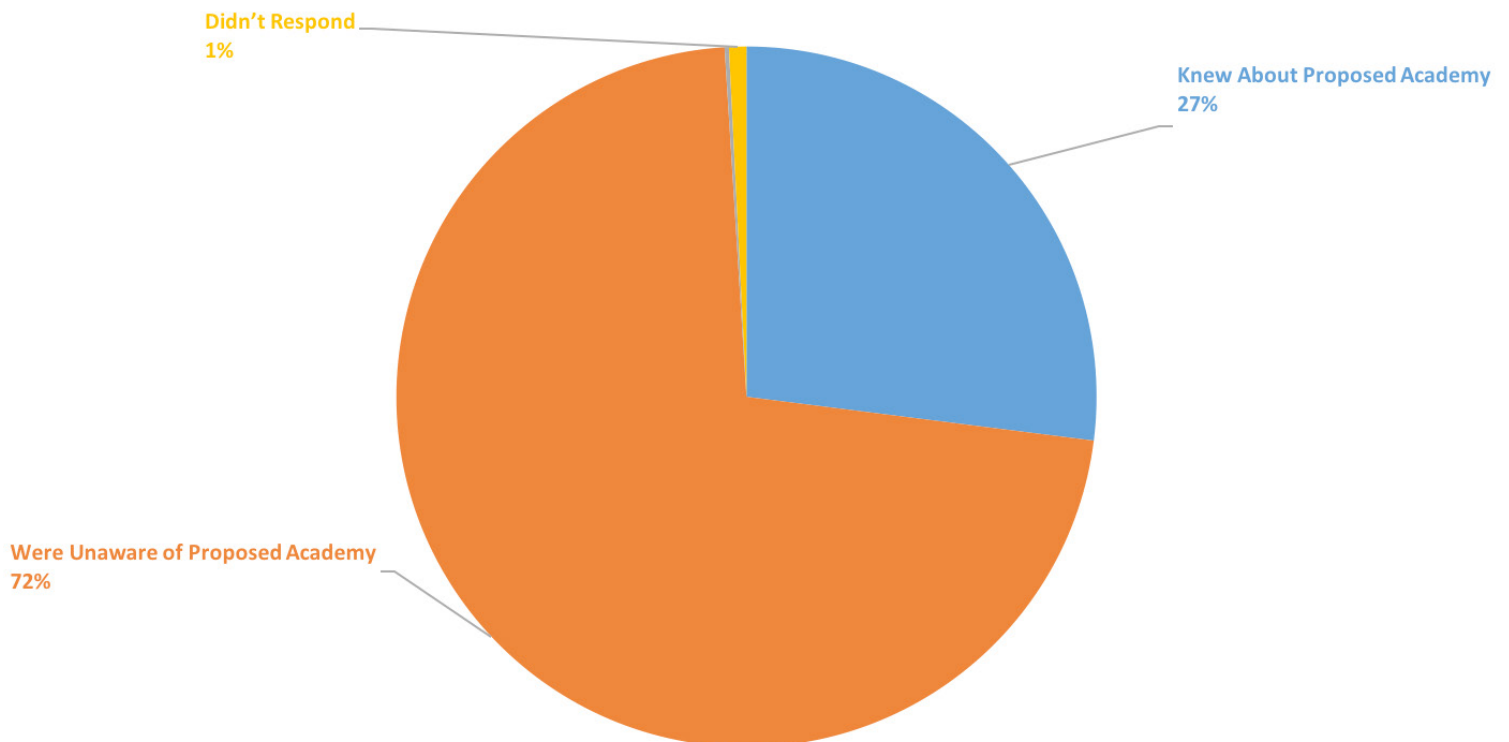
THE SURVEY

Throughout the months of January through March, a team of volunteer canvassers conducted a mass survey of 500 residents near the proposed site of the new Cop Academy. With the survey, our aim was to determine West Side residents' knowledge of the proposal to build a new Cop Academy in West Garfield Park, their support or disapproval of the proposal, and if they

could provide an alternative proposal for how to spend the \$95 million dollars that has been earmarked to build the Cop Academy. The results demonstrate wide disapproval for the Cop Academy from the vast majority of people surveyed, along with overwhelming desire for non-CPD investments that could transform public safety & well-being. Here's what we found:

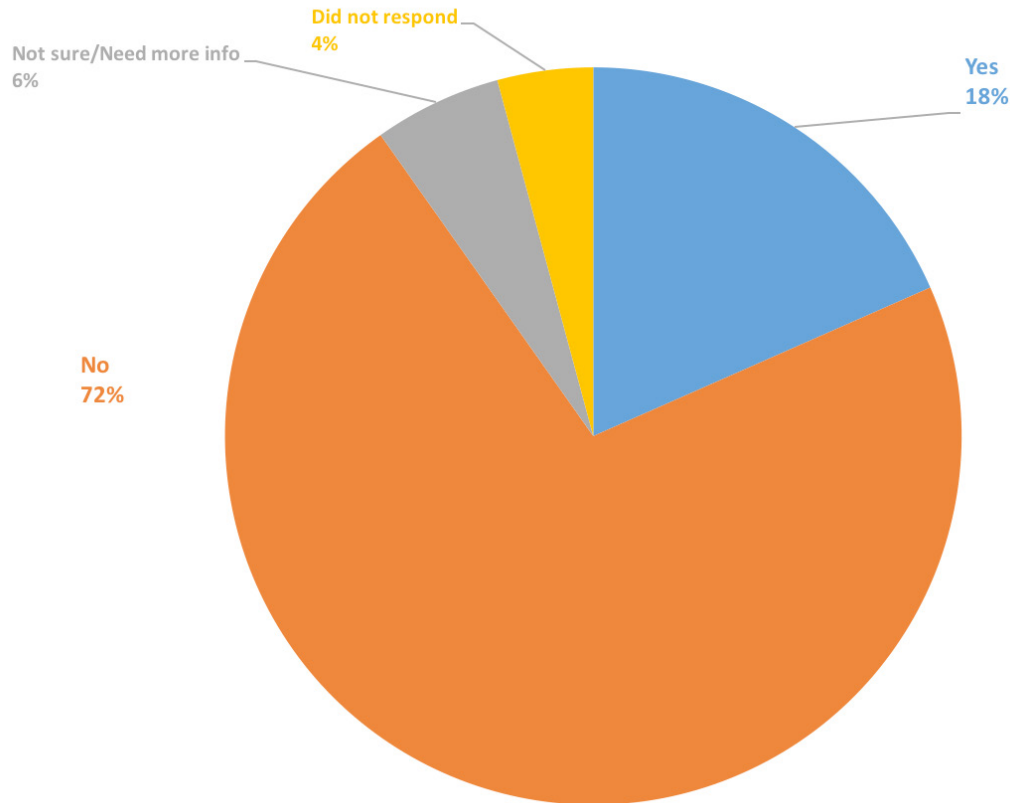
72% HAD NEVER HEARD ABOUT THE COP ACADEMY UNTIL APPROACHED BY ONE OF OUR CANVASSERS.

Q1: HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE PROPOSED \$95 MILLION POLICE & FIRE TRAINING ACADEMY TO BE BUILT ON WEST CHICAGO & KILBOURN?



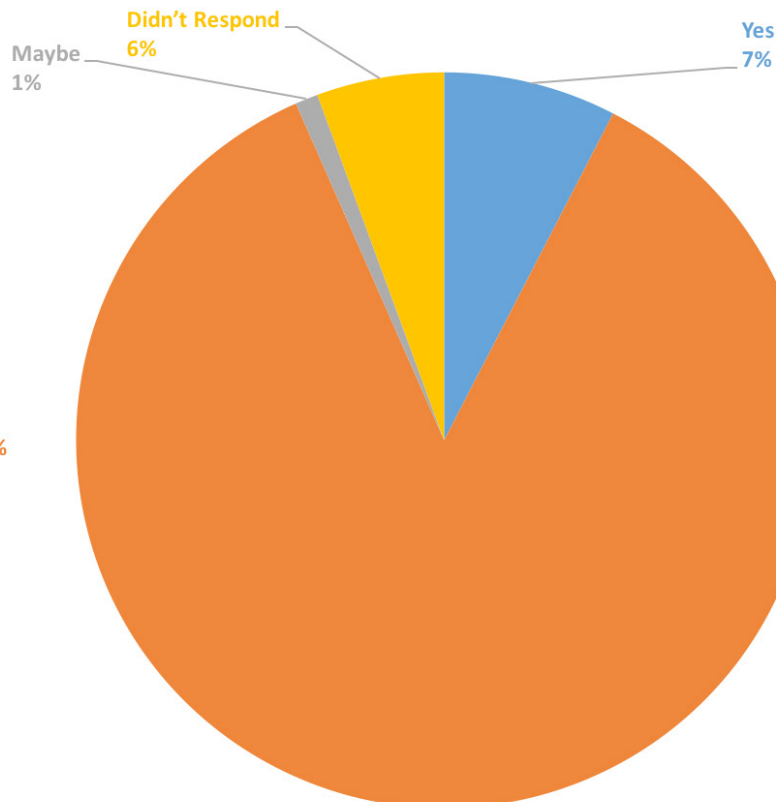
72% SAID THEY DO NOT WANT THE POLICE ACADEMY BUILT IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD, AND A FURTHER 10% EITHER DECLINED TO RESPOND OR SAID THEY NEEDED MORE INFORMATION.

Q2: DO YOU WANT THIS ACADEMY TO BE BUILT HERE?



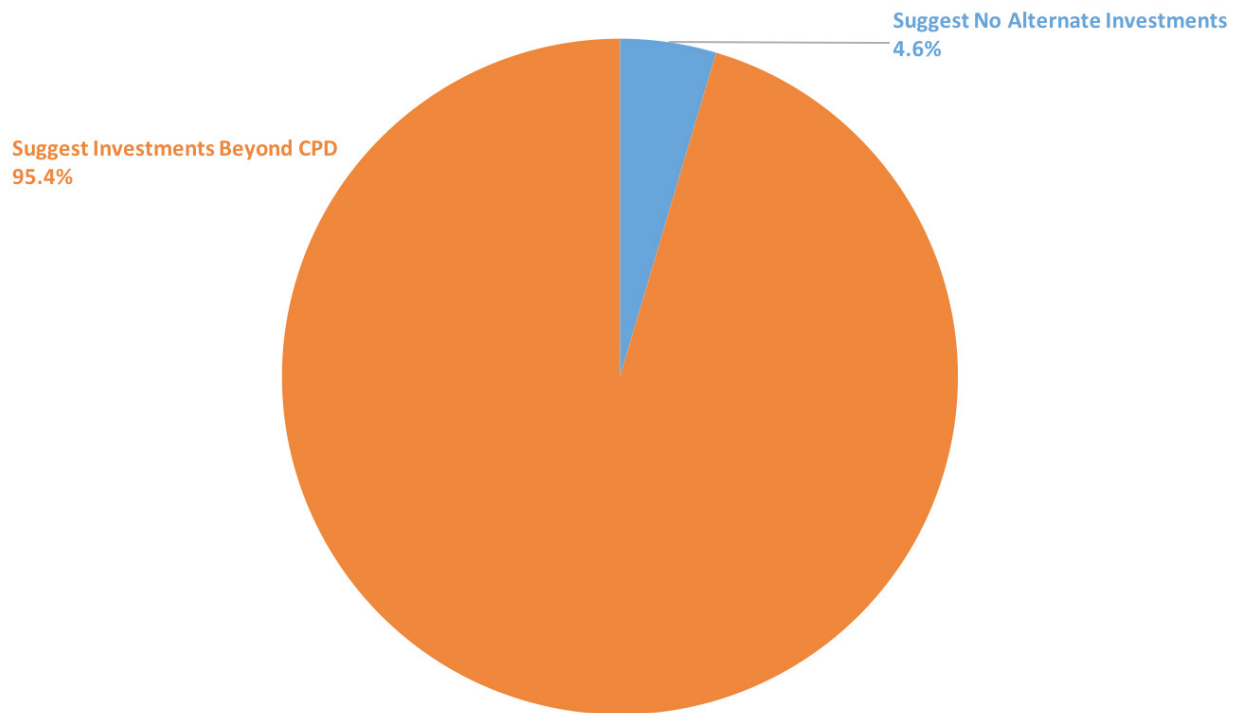
86% SAID THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IS THE BEST USE OF \$95 MILLION.

Q3: DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST WAY TO USE \$95 MILLION ON THE WEST SIDE?



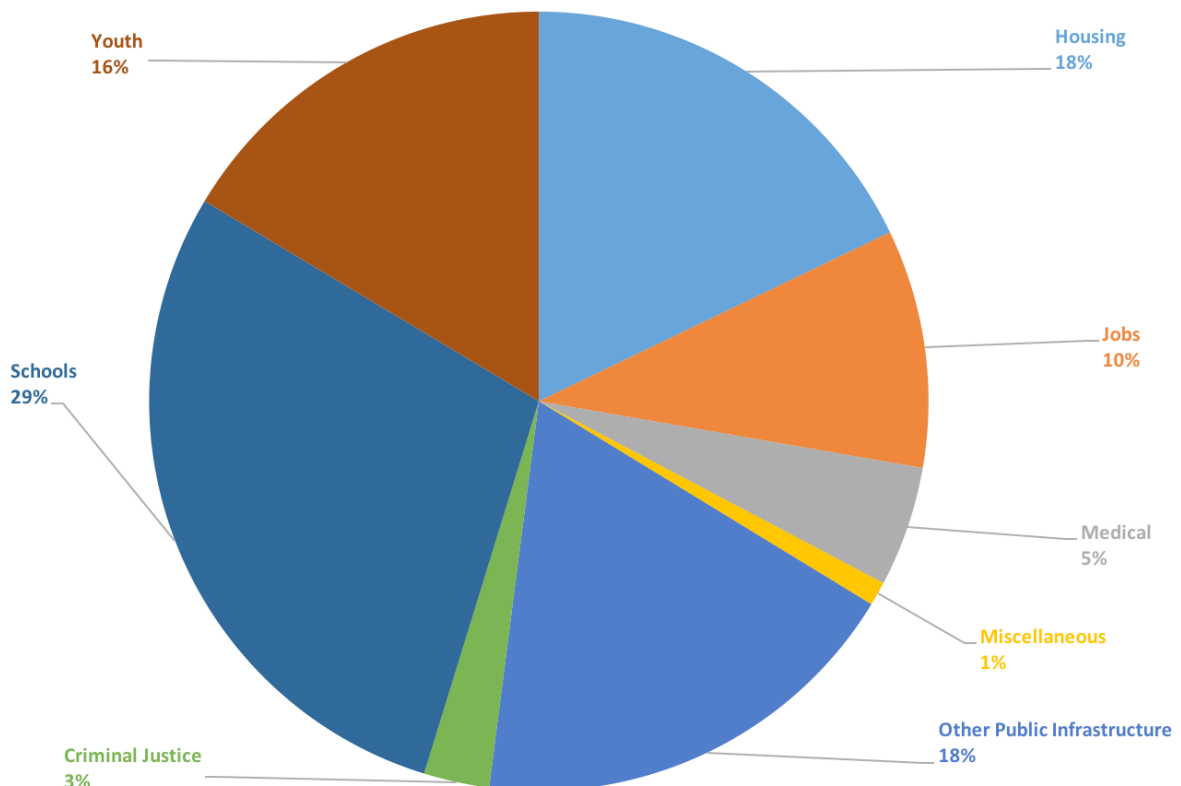
95% RECOMMENDED THAT THE CITY INVEST IN SOMETHING ELSE — BEYOND CPD.

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS SUGGESTING NON-CPD INVESTMENTS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PROPOSED POLICE ACADEMY



OVERALL, WE COLLECTED 1,103 COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WEST SIDE INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY.

RESPONSE SUMMARY: WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH \$95 MILLION FOR WEST SIDE COMMUNITIES?
(1103 COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS)



These results demonstrate a clear and profound desire on the part of West Garfield Park residents for meaningful investment that transforms the community and meets human needs, rather than make problems worse by increasing CPD presence. **That 86% of residents immediately stated they do not believe this is the best use of \$95 million dollars in the neighborhood is a damning condemnation of Mayor Emanuel and his allies' utter refusal to engage local residents around the academy.** Rather, he has sidestepped many community input processes by building the Cop Academy on the edge of a Planned Manufacturing District (see [page 22](#)).

Nearly 50% of residents surveyed immediately expressed their desire for after school programs for young people, safe places for youth to gather, quality and comprehensive educational opportunities through well-funded public schools, and more — all of which affirm that youth in the neighborhood deserve more City investment. The survey clearly demonstrates that there is far more widespread popular support for the demands of young Black activists seeking resources for youth services, when compared to the less than 3% asking for increased resources for traditional public safety measures, including CPD. Breakdown of the community recommendations reveal that **West Side residents know what they need**, and the City should invest in solutions that affirm rather than deny that reality.

To view the complete survey results, and for further breakdowns of each segment of community recommendations, visit nocopacademy.com. The survey methodology is explained in detail on [page 27](#).

BREAKDOWN OF THE COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS REVEAL THAT **WEST SIDE RESIDENTS KNOW WHAT THEY NEED.**



THE #NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN

YOUTH DIRECTED, ADULT SUPPORTED

From the onset, the #NoCopAcademy campaign has been a youth-directed, adult-supported effort. For us, this is critical because it means we are meaningfully building with young people at every stage of the campaign, while honoring that there are roles to play across generations. So often, even “youth movements” fail to start young enough, or tokenize individual young people’s leadership within an effort.

For example, too few tell the story of how Fred Hampton in Chicago, the renowned Black Panther Party leader assassinated by Chicago Police and the FBI in 1969 at the age of 21, was provided leadership opportunities and mentoring through the NAACP youth council where he organized a 500 person strong youth chapter, before he took up with the Panthers. Teenagers and youth under the age of 18 have so much to bring to this effort, as people who experience policing on the regular, and have a multitude of ideas for how to transform their communities. Even more critically, teenagers who have access to community organizing strategies, networks, and relationships can take those skills with them throughout young adulthood.

In practice, a youth-directed effort is not necessarily the same as youth-led. Young people are present at all layers — from planning and research, to action and reflection — but aren’t necessarily expected to complete every task along the way. In a youth-directed, intergenerational effort we move at the speed we are able to build trust and working relationships together, especially as more and more young people become involved.

This is necessary for young people to develop the skills and confidence necessary to complete

campaigns at every level independently. It’s absolutely critical that adult organizers provide for transportation and food at all meetings and actions, so that teens can physically participate. Protip: any youth ally will keep extra phone chargers on them at all times.

More critical than having young people seen at actions, is that even the youngest walk away from an action and understand the what, why, and how of what was done. This includes the strategy, the message, and the tactical logistics. Of course we are constantly learning and growing and developing our approach to youth organizing, but these are some key elements of how we’ve built the #NoCopAcademy campaign.

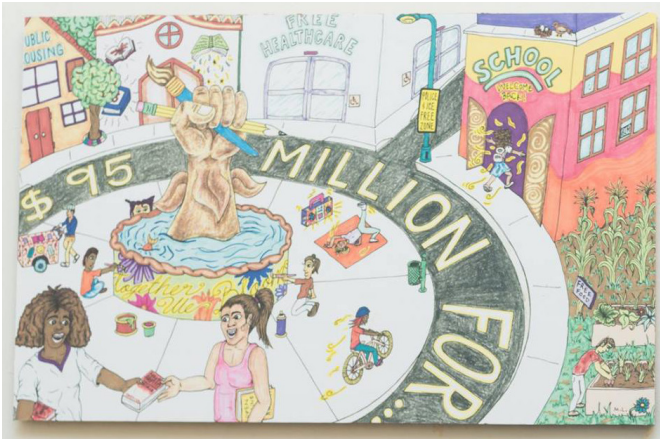
ART & CULTURAL WORK FROM THE GO!

Art & culture were deemed indispensable to the campaign from day one. When artists and organizers work together, we’re able to illustrate and illuminate the conditions we’re addressing and construct visual power for our communities who feel powerless. That’s why we put out a call for artists literally a day after we publicly launched the campaign as something tangible for people to do to support.

We invited people, of all art skill levels, to imagine a future where the city has given them \$95 million dollars for their community’s needs, and to tell us what it would look like. We had artists who emphasized the importance of mental health services, after-school programs, community gardens, art corridors, housing for the homeless population, reparations, getting rid of surveillance, trauma-informed counseling, and so much more.

THE #NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN

One piece by artist Miguel Lopez, who is also a member of Organized Communities Against Deportations, was so powerful because it emphasized a circular community with the central focus being various modes of self expression, self-determination, and well-being practices for people of all ages. Miguel's poster clearly emphasized that our city is aching for SO much more than what we're being offered, and we wanted to utilize artwork as a pathway to reminding ourselves what would actually help provide real, community safety in our neighborhoods.



USING THE MEDIA & MAKING OUR OWN

A critical part of organizing is telling our own stories and shaping the media narrative. Every time we stage an action or event, we tweet, write, and speak about our actions. By persistently documenting our work, we've made #NoCop Academy a national story, and a key flashpoint in Chicago politics.

In addition to generating our own media, we consistently engage large press outlets to ensure our campaign reaches thousands. Teen media reps have spent hours preparing tight talking points and fine-tuning their interview tactics, so that mainstream media does not detract them from their narrative.

Our press outreach efforts have won us mentions in dozens of stories in independent and mainstream publications, including a [feature piece](#) in Teen Vogue. In These Times published an [investigation](#) into how Rahm Emanuel is funneling money earmarked for job creation into the Cop Academy. And #NoCopAcademy organizers [published](#) their own investigative article in Truthout, based on the findings of multiple FOIA requests. Our campaign has been mentioned in every major Chicago newspaper, as well as key national outlets, from [Mother Jones](#) to [Injustice Today](#).

Of course, we don't have full control over the media narrative. Despite our efforts, the leadership of Black youth is often erased from mainstream media coverage, particularly in the Chicago Sun-Times. But in just six months, we have successfully disrupted Rahm Emanuel's attempts to falsely portray his Cop Academy as a step towards accountability and de-escalation of police violence. Instead, we've notified the public that public dollars are being diverted into the city's most violent institution.

THE #NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN

DISRUPTIVE POWER

We understand power, at its most basic level, to be the ability to control circumstances or to make things happen. As a grassroots effort, directed by young people who are systematically marginalized and aren't allowed to even vote, how do we build enough power to beat the Mayor's heavily resourced office? Furthermore, as abolitionists critical of the state, how do we target those with decision making power without giving them more power in the process? Through a strategy built on the power of disruption!

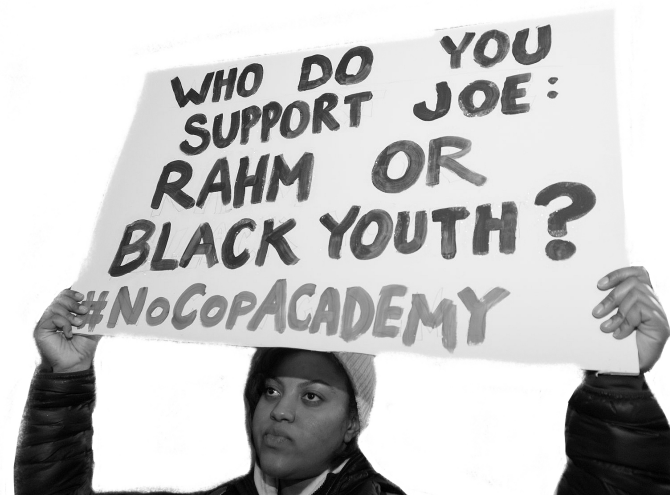
We believe that disrupting "business as usual" directly challenges the power structure, and its ability to "control circumstances." When City Council is on the defensive, it means we have successfully challenged their power. When the Mayor's office has to hold a special press conference to reassure the public or change their narrative, that's a testament of our power. When young Black people's leadership and their demands are the headline in national media, that's a win for us!

We are committed to building up our power, through disruption. This is directly tied to the Black Radical Tradition's long legacy of using disobedience to generate social change. This employs a wide range of tactics, tied together in an escalation strategy that maintains its momentum and builds pressure over time.

ACTION TIMELINE

Since the public launch of the #NoCopAcademy campaign with a press conference at City Hall on September 20th, 2017, we've carried out so many actions that this overview will be far from comprehensive.

Rather, we hope that by sharing the range of tactics employed at various phases of the campaign, more people will understand the artistry behind building mass popular support for an issue. The majority of these actions have been carried out collaboratively by members of multiple organizations endorsing the campaign, others have been held by single orgs showing their support. Our strategy has been to use a range of tactics (in part so that the young people involved have examples of what is possible), that escalate and build in pressure at critical moments (e.g. before a City Council vote).



ACTION TIMELINE



At that first **PRESS CONFERENCE**, I was nervous to speak in public but now I'm ready for people to hear my voice. We've made so much noise around the city I want people to hear me." — Jaylen, 20, *Assata's Daughters*.

The West Side **TEACH-INS** have been a way to hold space for knowledge-sharing and building a shared analysis around how to address community issues. We ask questions and share stories, art, and poems to help paint a fuller picture and ground the campaign in folks' lived experiences.

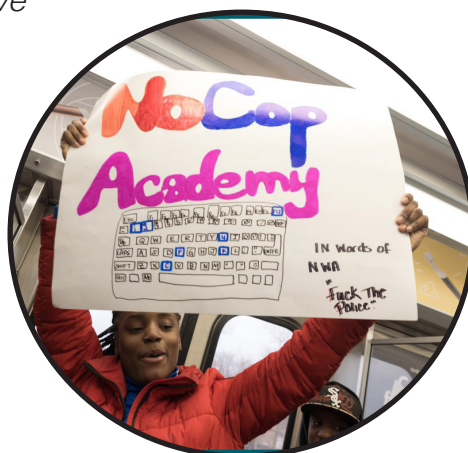
— Melisa Stephen, *Jane Addams Senior Caucus*

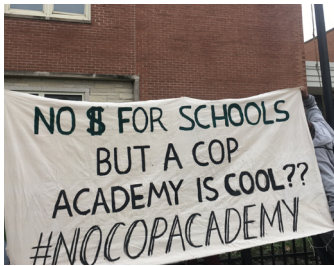


ART PARTIES offer many ways for people to get involved, by gathering people all in one space to create art and propaganda, while simultaneously using that as a political education opportunity, and helping folks build relationships. Art parties have been critical in the early stages of this campaign, and several other abolitionist efforts in Chicago!

— Monica Trinidad,
For the People Artists Collective

I like the **TRAIN TAKE-OVER** as a PSA type of tool because it seemed that not everyone that we engaged with was fully aware of what was going on with the Cop Academy, but most people did have an interest in school issues and where funding is flowing. I also liked that we weren't just there to shout but were also engaging with people with the whiteboard and passing out zines, and some people were dancing which makes it more joyful for a train passenger. — Marcos, *Whitney Young High School Student*





Banner drops



Call-in days to City Council



Chance the Rapper testifies at City Hall

MOBILIZING BEFORE THE LAND PURCHASE VOTE IN CITY COUNCIL

November 8th, 2017



The #NoCopAcademy **WORKSHOP** was a perfect addition to our Reparations Won unit. Assata's Daughters helped the students realize that the struggle with policing is very much on going. [The facilitator] also allowed the students to imagine how they think the city could use \$95 million instead of building a new police academy. She also provided a civics lesson by telling them how to contact their alderman. — *Dave Stieber, CPS Teacher*

A team of volunteers led by Black Lives Matter Chicago hit the 37th ward for a massive West Side undertaking **CANVAS & SURVEY** from January through March. Read more about it on [page 7](#).



I was absolutely ecstatic to actually be offered an opportunity by SoapBox Productions & Organizing to explore my idea of a **VIDEO** revealing to the city that cop academies, like the one next to my school, did not make students feel more safe, nor helped address root causes of crime. I am glad that the youth of No Cop Academy are given the tools to further project our voice toward issues that are often silenced, degraded to racist stereotypes of our people, or dismissed as not serious to the well being of society.” — *Asha Edwards, Assata's Daughters Teen Member*

Allies around the country **DISRUPTED RAHM EMANUEL** during his lectures on college campuses to say #NoCopAcademy. Two lone students at the University of Michigan started the trend, which was picked up by a handful of students at UCLA, a full-on demonstration at Harvard, and a closed-door confrontation at Spelman. These disruptions have caught headlines in Chicago & across the country, and garnered tens of thousands of views on Facebook & Twitter videos.

The **TWITTER COMPETITION** we designed consisted of all grades 9th-12th. Each grade had their own hashtag they had to use (along with #NoCopAcademy). They also had to follow the guidelines in order for their tweet to be counted. They had the option of using information we provided them or they could tell what they wanted to do with the \$95 million.
— Nerica, Simeon Young Activists



Fredrick Poole @fredrickp10le · Mar 20

How do they want to build a state of the art swimming pool for cop academy, but we don't have curtains to shower after swim class.#SimeonCares2021 #NoCopAcademy



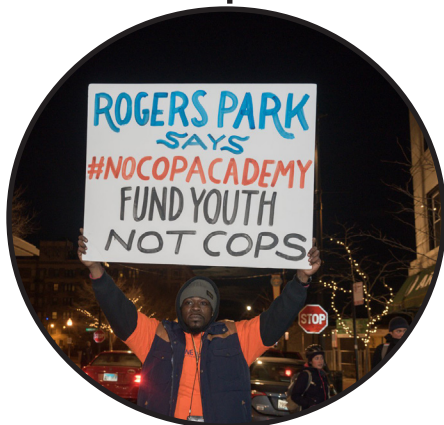
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Coalition organizations **PROTESTED** outside the aldermanic office during a ward night (Deb Mell, 33), and held a vigil and march highlighting how alderman Joe Moore, 49th ward, divested from communities while investing in police.

On Lunar New Year, supporters marched in the Chinatown parade saying
#NOCOPACADEMY!



SCHOOL WALKOUT & PROTESTS — MARCH 14TH

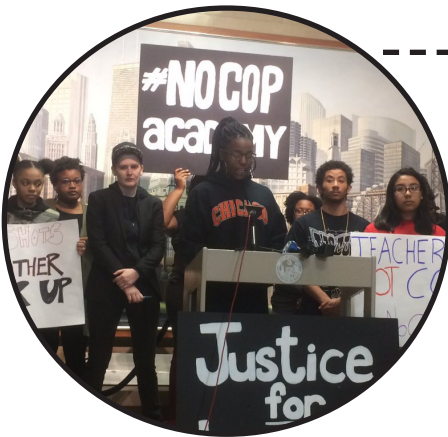
“Black and Brown students from Kelly, Back of the Yards, and Curie came together to come in solidarity against gun control by addressing that police brutality is gun violence. The dialogue between students consisted of demanding school funding and more counselors instead of adding more security in public schools. Our turnout was vibrant and loud. Our unity, care and love for each other was visible as students chanted, shared experiences, understood our frustration and anger but overall our determination and passion towards change took control that day.”
#NoCopAcademy was one of 17 demands.

— Veronica R, Pilsen Alliance Youth Committee & Brighton Park Neighborhood Council



“About 100 youth ...from Bronzeville, Washington Park, West Chatham, West Garfield Park, and Austin all shared the day [...] analyzing, discussing, and activating their vision of alternatives to the proposed police academy. The #NoCopAcademy **YOUTH SUMMIT** not only offered a variety of outlets for participants to be civically engaged, but it allowed youth to freely dictate their level of political engagement. When organizers announced plans to canvass the Austin neighborhood for campaign support, many teens and kids freely volunteered for the unglamorous work. Others stayed behind to join other political activities, converse with friends, or to eat if they were hungry.”

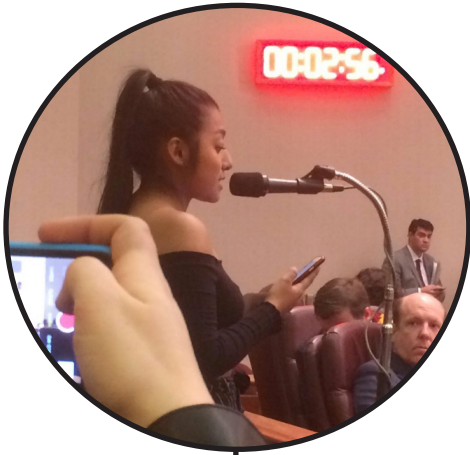
— Charles Preston for the Chicago Defender



Activists with the #NoCopAcademy campaign filed a **LAWSUIT** against the Mayor’s Office for withholding critical e-mails regarding the proposed \$95 Million new CPD facility, including evidence that the DOJ report did not prompt the new facility construction.

The **FLASHMOB** on the Monday of CPS spring break was a great way to build more trust together after the youth summit, and draw attention to the campaign.





PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT CITY COUNCIL

At first it was really nerve wracking and I was afraid that I might not have the guts to say things the way I wanted to. But after a while my nerves turned into anger, and that's when it all came out. I hope that the politicians felt the anger that I was trying to address.

— Karla, Pilsen Alliance Youth Committee on her Public Testimony at City Hall

DIE-IN AT CITY HALL

At one point the police were forcing people out of elevators and pushing and shoving us. It was hard with the tension to stay calm and not get overwhelmed...[But] the amount of support from people who were just walking by and joining in and asking about and supporting our purpose was great. We became the #1 Chicago hashtag, we had an open mic and even played games — there was a great sense of community. Numerous media outlets showed up, so I think our voices were heard and sparked conversation.

— Destiny Harris, 17 (As quoted in Teen Vogue describing the Die-in at City Hall)



One of the things we've already changed with #NoCopAcademy is that we aren't letting Rahm sweep this under the rug. He was probably expecting this to pass with flying colors and then we came along and opened the door, put a door stop in and said 'nuh-uh' — no rugs, nothing to stop us. There's all these little people coming together making a giant and fighting him back! He doesn't care about what happens to the Black people or the poor people, because if he cared a lot of things would be different.

SO NOW HE HAS TO DEAL WITH US.

—Nita Tennyson, Assata's Daughters

THE #NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN

ENGAGING CITY COUNCIL

In order for Mayor Emanuel's Cop Academy to be built, it must pass through a series of City Council votes. Several stages — including re-zoning, property purchase, and selecting the construction company — must be approved. Therefore, we knew engaging City Council had to be one aspect of our larger strategy and reaching our overall target. However, we don't see City Council approval and support as the only way to "win" — rather we see this as another forum to put into practice our strategy of building power through disruption.

We believe we can use and manipulate the structure of City Council (its public meetings and comments) to disrupt the Mayor's narrative that \$95 million invested in a "public safety" facility will make Chicagoans safer or bring justice for Laquan. If we flipped even one alderperson to vote against the Mayor, we'd disrupt Rahm Emanuel's hold on City Council, creating stress and chaos in his agenda that slows down the project, giving us more time to organize and build power.

Along the way, here's ten things we've learned about engaging City Council:

- 1 City Council offers a limited space for public engagement. This narrow window isn't actually meant to facilitate civic engagement, but it does create a space we can use to show up, apply pressure and disrupt the process. Combining that effort with social media draws unwanted attention to City Council and generates public pressure.

- 2 Before an ordinance reaches City Council, it must be approved by the appropriate committee. All committees must allow public comments for proposed ordinances. Thus, we can use that committee meeting as an opportunity to turn up. Committee meeting agendas are only posted with 72 hours' notice, though, so watch closely!

- 3 Talking to Alderpeople can be intimidating, so provide training and practice. At a coalition meeting, A SOUL organizer shared advice on how to get a meeting, pressure alderpeople, how to document the meeting, and follow up. This training was especially useful because many of us had not engaged aldermen before.

- 4 While meetings with Alderpeople are important, they can be hard to schedule. Most Alderpeople host semi-regular "Ward Nights" where residents can drop in to discuss concerns. We used a copy of the Ward Night schedule online to reach a number of City Council members. Even if they don't agree to change their vote, these meetings are critical: they prevent Alderpeople from being able to say "none of my constituents have complained" and they can reveal useful information about what pressure or steps are needed for an Alderperson to change their vote next time.

THE #NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN

5 Having even one City Council member supporting you can make a huge difference. 35th Ward Alderman, Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, became an early supporter of the campaign. He helped us get seats on the floor of the hearing on the land purchase on November 8th, 2017, reserve spots to testify, and spoke at our pre-meeting news conference.

6 News cameras & reporters are always at City Council meetings — if you have friends who can get headlines, invite them to join you for public comment. A youth-led train takeover by Assata's Daughters and BTGNC caught Chicago's Chance the Rapper's eye in late October, 2017. The coalition reached out to him, and he agreed to testify at the November City Council Hearing. The result? This plan that Rahm was trying to pass quietly, without drawing attention, became national news! Not only was the proposed Cop Academy covered, but the media paid more attention to our campaign and its message than it might have otherwise; we saw 24 individual media pieces on the campaign the day after the hearing, with overwhelmingly positive takes.

7 City Council meetings are long, and designed to ease pressure from the public comment section at the beginning. Public sentiment was clearly in our favor during the public comments portion of the meeting at 10 am. However, the vote was several hours later at 2 pm, when we had less presence in Council chambers, allowing the Mayor to whip alderman support back to his side.

Our inside intel shared that if the vote had taken place at 10 am, up to six aldermen might have voted against the ordinance. But by 2pm only Carlos Ramirez-Rosa was willing to vote "No."

8 The City Council unanimously votes with the Mayor over 95% of the time. Even getting one alderman to oppose the land purchase was a significant win. But if we were going to stop this project, we needed to pull more aldermen to our side. In Chicago, you can take advantage of a City Council procedure called "Defer & Publish" which stalls the vote. You only need two Alderpeople willing to make this motion.

9 Public opinion is beginning to shift against the Cop Academy, and alderman are beginning to rethink their position. We've made Rahm visibly upset; [he has walked out on testimony twice](#); the press has noticed and [reported it](#). We've made connections with other campaigns and organizations in the city, and we've demonstrated that young people across the city have a radical vision for safer communities and refuse to allow this project to happen uninterrupted.

10 Even if it's not up for vote, we can use City Council meetings to keep them on their toes. They don't want people attending those meetings, so the more attention we draw to them, the more agitated they become. The narrowness of the process they allow enables easy agitation. A simple mic check can go viral and bring issues City Council preferred to keep quiet into a national spotlight.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CITY'S PROCESS

ALDERMANIC PREROGATIVE

Emma Mitts is the Alderwoman of the 37th ward, the proposed site of Rahm's academy. Despite multiple attempts by her constituents to meet with her, she has refused and sidestepped meaningful community input at every stage of the project. She introduced a zoning change for the land back in April 2017, a full three months before the plan was made public, demonstrating that she has been on the inside for a considerable period.¹⁰

When asked by an 8th grade student who lives on her block why her opinion doesn't matter, Mitts replied that 'the community' had already met and approved of the plan. The community — according to Mitts — consists of the 60-80 people who attend her regularly scheduled monthly meetings. These individuals alone do not represent the various voices in her ward! Further, after speaking with community members in the 37th ward, we know many were unaware of the proposed Cop Academy. Voting with Emma Mitts due to Aldermanic Prerogative is a vote in line with an alderwoman who is disconnected from the needs of her community, and who refuses to engage with them about the proposed academy.

It's worth mentioning that she has voted with Mayor Emanuel over 97% of the time, and supported school and clinic closures in 2012 & 2013. During her highly contested campaign in 2015, roughly \$74,000 of her campaign ads were funded by Chicago Forward, a PAC aligned with Mayor Emanuel, along with \$10,000 from Mayor Emanuel directly.¹¹

'Aldermanic Prerogative' is an informal but very real code in City Council by which alderpeople are very hesitant to vote against the desires of an Alderperson regarding an ordinance that would primarily impact their ward. This practice is extremely flawed and dangerous because this issue can have tremendous impact on the city as a whole.

CHICAGO INFRASTRUCTURE TRUST

In 2012, Rahm Emanuel launched a Trust aiming to allow the city to tap private investors to improve city infrastructure including buildings, highways, transit systems, bridges, etc.

Since its inception, the Chicago Infrastructure Trust has failed to achieve its purported goals.¹² Their first project, Retrofit One, raised a mere \$13.5 million of the \$220 anticipated. The project was scaled back, and the Infrastructure Trust was dormant for nearly 10 months after. The Smart Lighting Project, retrofitting street-lights and security cameras throughout the city was slated to cost \$160 million, and to date there have been no comprehensive financial plans shared with City Council.

Building off this underwhelming track record, it was announced that the Cop Academy, or referred to by the City as the "Joint Public Safety Training Academy" would be overseen by the Chicago Infrastructure Trust in July of 2017. Already, they are behind schedule¹³ and have yet to raise funds (beyond what the city has allotted via TIF) for the Cop Academy.

PROBLEMS WITH THE CITY'S PROCESS

In addition to their underperformance, this Mayor-appointed semi-private entity is overseeing projects that would have historically been handled by city agencies, including the Department of Planning and Development. CIT is also months behind in sharing notes and records from their meetings on their website, and demonstrate zero accountability to residents of Chicago.

PLANNED MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS

The Cop Academy is slated to be built in the Northwest PMD 9, one of 14 Planned Manufacturing Districts (PMDs) in Chicago. PMD zoning laws have evolved significantly since Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced his Industrial Corridor Modernization Initiative and accompanying fund in 2016.

PMD zoning designation was created in the 1980s to “discourage conversion to non-industrial uses” and, according to Rahm Emanuel’s Department of Planning and Development, to stop the “encroachment” of residential communities onto industrial zones. One of the ways PMDs “protect” industrial property is by prohibiting residential development such as daycares, schools, grocers, and other resources that could be used by communities.

However, new PMDs were largely embedded directly into residential areas that desperately need these types of prohibited developments. Alderman Brian Hopkins said in 2016 that the PMD restrictions in his ward felt like “a set of handcuffs.”¹⁴ It is notable that Chicago’s PMDs are primarily located in low-income communities with high concentrations of people of color and immigrants: the community surrounding the proposed Cop Academy is 96% Black.

There is little to no room for community input into development in PMD zones, since this zoning was explicitly created to subordinate the needs of community to the needs of diminishing private industry. Projects in PMDs are able to access a streamlined and consolidated development process, with far fewer steps than the city requires for other planned construction. This has proven to be a counter-intuitive and ultimately damaging economic trade off. By cutting out resident voices under the guise of “protecting” industries in certain areas from the communities in which they operate, rather than innovating the management of public and private property to better utilize and support local human resources including families, public health, and public education, these policies accomplish one thing: they blight our city. The development brought to PMDs have been accompanied by gentrification and the displacement of low income communities of color.

Further — the specific PMD that includes the site of the proposed Cop Academy, was established in 2004 and the lines were literally drawn adjacent to Orr Academy High School. Despite being zoned ‘industrial,’ this PMD, like many others, is in a mixed residential area, resulting in environmental harms towards community residents.



UNPACKING RAHM EMANUEL'S RHETORIC

THEY SAY: “THIS NEW FACILITY IS A DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE REPORT, AND IS THE ANSWER TO THE LAQUAN MCDONALD SCANDAL.”

Rahm Emanuel has worked tirelessly over the past two years to recover from his role in the Laquan McDonald scandal, even calling for [“nothing less than total and complete reform of the system.”](#) Emanuel suppressed the video of the October 2014 murder of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald by a Chicago police officer for 400 days in order to help secure his bid for re-election in 2015.

Emanuel has rolled out various “police reforms” to champion his new “tough on CPD” performance. He’s rallied behind the use of body cameras, more compassionate training techniques, and tasers. However, these proposed solutions only expand resources for the police, and fail to hold them accountable for their long standing racism and violence. What’s more, Emanuel doesn’t appear to believe in the reforms he champions.

In December 2015, he initially [resisted](#) calls for Department of Justice review, and relented only after [public pressure](#) from fellow Democrats. When the DOJ completed its yearlong investigation in January 2017, Emanuel agreed to sign a federal consent decree. A consent decree is a court enforced settlement between the DOJ and a police department that has been found to display a “pattern and practice” of misconduct.¹⁵

In spite of his resistance to the DOJ, he is now conveniently using one aspect of one of their recommendations to justify massive spending on the Cop Academy. The DOJ report outlined at least 99 recommended reforms for the Chicago Police Department — ranging from stronger oversight, to de-escalation training, and clearer policies for foot chases and use of force.¹⁶ Within months of the DOJ report release however, and before implementing any substantive number of these reforms, Mayor Emanuel announced his plans for a new training facility for CPD, citing the one partially relevant DOJ recommendation to “Improve CPD’s physical training facilities and equipment,” and manipulating that in order to justify a massive infrastructure overhaul that was already planned and in development.

Documents uncovered via Freedom of Information Act Requests reveal email conversations about the academy were taking place between the mayor’s office and Fleet and Facilities Management as early as October 2016, a full three months before the DOJ released its findings in January 2017. Clearly he is using the DOJ report to win public support for what would otherwise be a controversial expansion of Chicago Police capabilities.

Further, while Emanuel seeks to pick and choose DOJ recommendations for CPD, there is evidence to suggest that large-scale, federal overhauls of police forces initiated by the DOJ do little to deter police misconduct in the long term.

UNPACKING RAHM EMANUEL'S RHETORIC

According to a 2015 Washington Post [article](#), the Pittsburgh Police Department has struggled to retain the reforms that were supposedly set in place after its DOJ consent decree was lifted. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was also under a consent decree from 2001 until 2013. Compliance with this consent was costly: it totaled \$300 million, which includes \$41 million spent on the renovation of the LAPD's training academy. In 2013, the ACLU lauded the LAPD for efforts to change the force, and declared, ["This is no longer your father's Los Angeles Police Department."](#) However, from 2013- 2017, no police department in the country killed more people than the [LAPD](#). There is clear evidence that even with Department of Justice intervention and investment of money in police department "reforms," outcomes for citizens show little improvement.¹⁷ Even Department of Justice officials have stated the problems with investing in brick and mortar before substantially proving that training content itself has shifted:

"You can have the most up-to-date training facility in the world and still have officers that go out and consistently do the wrong thing if the content of the training isn't appropriate...If they're being strategic about it, they would put some more...into training content and be able to show a difference there before they start asking for money for brick and mortar."¹⁸

-Christy Lopez, who oversaw police reform efforts at the Department of Justice under President Barack Obama.

The City of Chicago shells out millions of dollars per year on police violence and misconduct settlements alone; Rahm Emanuel's willingness to pad the issue with a \$95 million cop training facility is more of a reward and less of a critique of training content for officers.

THEY SAY: "THIS NEW FACILITY WILL LEAD TO BETTER TRAINING FOR THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT."

First and foremost, a new training building does not mean new training. The Cop Academy offers more of the same, but with added resources and advanced technology for cops at the expense of our communities. Of the DOJ's 99 recommendations, there are several that should be implemented with more urgency to address the violence and impunity of CPD.

Some of the 99 DOJ recommendations¹⁹ that should be implemented with more urgency as opposed to building the Cop Academy include: "Develop foot pursuit policy", "Track, analyze, and publish complaints of racial discrimination", and "Increase transparency of police misconduct lawsuit settlements."

UNPACKING RAHM EMANUEL'S RHETORIC

A new police training facility doesn't address issues of accountability, such as the lack of firing or convicting police officers after harm has occurred. As Alderman Carlos Ramirez Rosa told the Chicago Reader earlier this year, "There's no study that says if you build a new gleaming structure, [the police] will stop shooting black youth and mistreating civilians," he says. "What's required is real accountability and community oversight of the police."²⁰

No new building can address the structural violence of policing, or erase the racism and violence that is embedded. The public outrage that has put Rahm Emanuel and CPD under so much pressure is not calling for a new building: Our demand is clear — investment for community resources and accountability for police.

"There's no study that says if you build a new gleaming structure, [the police] will stop shooting black youth and mistreating civilians," he says. "What's required is real accountability and community oversight of the police."

-Alderman Carlos Ramirez Rosa

THEY SAY: "THIS NEW FACILITY WILL BRING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO WEST GARFIELD PARK."

The Emanuel Administration has lauded the facility as an economic driver that would bring positive change to West Garfield Park. In a press statement announcing the academy in July of 2017, Chicago Infrastructure Trust (CIT) Executive Director Leslie Darling extolled "not only will the new Academy

provide state-of-the-art training opportunities to the men and women of Chicago's public safety departments, it will represent a significant investment by the City in the West Garfield Park neighborhood."²¹ However, the only requirement of hiring local workers, as outlined in a presentation from CIT, was a mere 15% from the surrounding neighborhoods²². Additionally, the only jobs created by the project will be temporary construction jobs. West Garfield Park has an unemployment rate more than double that of the City, and median household income is just 36% of the median household income of that of the Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area²³. Any claim of "significant investment" must accompany a comprehensive plan for how the economic development would impact the residents currently residing in the neighborhood. **The City has yet to release any information in the past nine months since their initial press statement detailing how the Cop Academy will generate inclusive economic growth.** The precariousness of temporary jobs has not proven to significantly stabilize steady employment for low-income workers,²⁴ rendering the City's declaration of significant investment factually inaccurate and hell-bent on a dangerously short-sighted economic development schema.

We insist that \$95 million be invested in West Garfield Park, but on programs and resources that actually provide direct benefits to the neighborhood and address the community's priorities.

CLOSING

In just over 6 months, young Black people with the support of adult allies across the city have successfully called into question the logic of a ‘routine’ city infrastructure project, drummed up mass resistance to continued unquestioned investment in the Chicago Police Department, and demonstrated Rahm Emanuel’s hypocrisy and continued hatred for Black communities at large.

To date, 70 community organizations have actively participated in the campaign, more than 63 articles have covered #NoCopAcademy in outlets across the country, and thousands of people have participated in dozens of actions across Chicago, and even as far away as Los Angeles and Atlanta. Grassroots organizations from a wide sector of social justice work, from labor groups to Democratic Socialists, from Black liberation organizations to senior citizen advocates, are coalescing around the idea that policing is not safety. Youth from Assata’s Daughters and Simeon Young Activists have become savvy media representatives, giving weekly interviews about their work and visions for a city where young people have what they need to survive and thrive. And organizers across the country have their eyes pinned on Chicago to see where this effort will go next.

We know that even without the new Cop Academy, Chicago Police will continue to receive training — with or without a new swimming pool, museum, and compound as an added plus. New CPD recruits have continued to graduate via the current training academy since the announcement of the new facility last summer, with Emanuel attending graduation ceremonies to oversee hundreds of officers sworn in, in November of 2017, and again on January 30th, 2018.²⁵ Regardless of how City Council proceeds in pushing forward Rahm Emanuel’s plan, #NoCopAcademy will continue to resist the expansion of CPD furthered by a massive cop compound in West Garfield Park.

We refuse to allow Mayor Emanuel and other establishment politicians to co-opt grassroots movements for accountability and calls for ending CPD violence, in order to expand policing. From the onset, Mayor Emanuel has framed this expansion as a “reform” project. No building will bring back Laquan. We will not tolerate the continued blank check that underwrites police violence in Chicago.

The #NoCopAcademy campaign has just started, and anyone who wants to see a Chicago where Black Lives Matter and youth have the resources needed to thrive can become a part of this story. Share one of our articles, call your City Council member and make sure they know where you stand on issues of policing, or host a fundraiser for Assata’s Daughters. There is always work to do to end police violence and build strong, safe communities.



SURVEY METHODS

We composed a brief questionnaire, which we administered to respondents at different locations in West Garfield Park. We also obtained contact information for residents of the 37th ward by utilizing the Van Voter Access Network. These contacts were used to administer surveys via phone and door to door canvassing.

Before we administered the survey, we introduced ourselves, stated the grassroots organizations that we were members of, and briefly described the proposal for the Cop Academy. Survey administrators were advised to not give their opinion about the Cop Academy until after the survey was completed. We did this in an effort to have unbiased data that we can present in this report.

Once the respondents consented to the survey, they were asked their name, contact information, ward, zip code, and if they would like to become more involved in the campaign. Potential respondents who were not from the West Side and were not frequent, invested visitors of the area were informed of the campaign and offered to sign up for a mailing list instead of the survey.

Next, we asked the respondents 3 closed ended questions:

- “Are you aware of Rahm Emanuel’s plan to build this?”
- “Do you want this built here?”
- “Do you think this is the best way to spend \$95 million dollars in this community?”

Responses to these questions were simply coded as yes, no, or maybe. Lastly, respondents were asked to give their feedback on an open ended question: “If you were to propose the city use this money differently, what would you want to see built?”. Responses to this question were placed into broad categories, and later divided further into sub-categories, in order to have more detailed analysis of what 37th ward residents would want to see in their ward instead of the Cop Academy.

All 500 surveys were administered in the 28th & 37th wards. Door knocking was restricted to the 37th ward. Street surveys were conducted within 1.5 miles of the proposed academy to investigate the sentiments of the most-impacted community, including those residents of neighboring wards who live within that radius; as well as frequent visitors and consumers of the area who were otherwise connected to the 37th and 28th wards, either by work, family, property ownership or community networks from having lived there previously. The only street surveys conducted outside the 1.5 mile radius were done at Washington Square Mall, the largest retail center in the 37th ward.

67.8 % of the respondents resided in the 37th ward. 10.4% of the participants resided in the 28th ward. 5% of the respondents lived on the West Side, but not the 37th or 28th wards. 4% did not live in the 37th ward, but were employed in or frequent the ward. These people will be affected by the Cop Academy, so it was imperative that their responses were analyzed and included in this report. 12.8% of respondents did not specify their address. While homelessness was not specifically tracked, many respondents either self-identified as homeless or said they had no fixed address, and thus were either classified as having an unspecified ward or listed with the ward where they primarily dwell.

CREDITS

#NOCOPACADEMY CAMPAIGN ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS (AS OF 11.19.18)

Assata's Daughters
People's Response Team
For The People Artists Collective
American Friends Service Committee- Chicago
Action Now
Alliance Educational Justice
Anakbayan Chicago
Arab American Action Network
A Just Harvest
A Long Walk Home
Axis Lab
Black Lives Matter Chicago
Black Youth Project 100 (BYP 100) Chicago Chapter
Black & Pink Chicago
Blocks Together
Brighton Park Neighborhood Council
BTGNC Collective
Care 2
Chicago ACT Collective
Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression
Chicago Boricua Resistance
Chicago Community Bond Fund
Chicago Democratic Socialists of America
Chicago Desi Youth Rising
Chicago Dyke March Collective
Chicago Freedom School
Chicago League of Abolitionist Whites (CLAW)
Chicago Religious Leadership Network
Chicago Student Action
Chicago Taskforce on Violence Against Girls and Young Women
Chicago Torture Justice Memorials
Chicago Votes
Circles & Ciphers
Corner Farm Chicago
DopeAAPI
Equitcity
Gay Liberation Network
Good Kids Mad City
Grassroots Collaborative
Health & Medicine Policy Research Group
Jane Addams Senior Caucus
Jewish Voice for Peace Chicago
If Not Now Chicago
Illinois Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA – IL)
Invisible to Invincible “i2i” Asian Pacific Islander LGBTQ
Pride of Chicago
Kuumba Lynx
Latino Union
Let Us Breathe Collective
Liberation Library
Lifted Voices
Little Village Environmental Justice Organization
Love and Protect
Lucy Parsons Lab
National Lawyers Guild of Chicago
Network 49
ONE Northside
Organized Communities Against Deportations
Pilsen Alliance Youth Committee
Prison + Neighborhood Arts Project
Project Fierce
Radical Public Health
Rising Tide Chicago
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Chicago
Simeon Young Activists
Slow Roll Chicago
SoapBox Productions and Organizing
Socialist Alternative Chicago Branch
Southsiders Organized for Unity and Liberation (SOUL)
Teachers for Social Justice
The 411 Movement for Justice for Pierre Loury
The People's Lobby
Thy Neighborhood
T.U.P.O.C.C The United People of Color Caucus of the NLG – Chicago Chapter
Tzedek Chicago
United Neighbors of the 35th Ward
Uptown People's Law Center
Veterans for Peace
War Resisters League Women's All Point Bulletin
Workers Center for Racial Justice

All endorsing organizations of the #NoCopAcademy campaign have agreed to the following guidelines:

- We'll do (at least) one action per quarter/phase of the campaign
- We won't negotiate with Rahm/the City on behalf of the campaign.²⁶
- We'll amplify each other's work.
- We'll center/prioritize young people of color's participation and leadership.
- We'll stay on message when repping the campaign

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- ¹⁵ Once Obama's presidency ended, Emanuel colluded with Trump's Justice Department to avoid federal oversight, and attempted to arrange for memorandum of understanding (MOU) instead. This MOU would not have required the mandatory federal judge oversight that consent decrees typically do, and only after being sued by Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan did he relent to mandatory oversight.
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