

**ANDRE VASQUEZ**

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**CITY OF CHICAGO  
CITY COUNCIL**

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CITY HALL, ROOM 34  
121 NORTH LASALLE STREET  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602  
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**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

SPECIAL EVENTS, CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
AND RECREATION  
(VICE-CHAIRMAN)

CONTRACT OVERSIGHT AND EQUITY

ECONOMIC, CAPITAL, AND TECHNOLOGY  
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PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

TRANSPORTATION AND THE PUBLIC WAY

ETHICS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

COMMITTEES AND RULES

November 20, 2020

Dear Neighbors,

After careful consideration and having evaluated all available options to address Chicago's unprecedented \$1.2 billion budget gap, I have decided to vote yes on the City's 2021 budget.

This was not an easy decision in part because the budget includes a property tax increase. However, the reality is that the COVID crisis has decimated Chicago's traditional revenue streams. Our tourism and hospitality industries were devastated, leaving us with fewer tax dollars to fund essential city services. The lack of additional aid at the state and federal levels further compounds these challenges. With no relief from Washington, and with state revenues impacted by the failure to pass a Fair Tax in Illinois, it is imperative to identify other sources of revenue to support what will likely be another difficult year for our City's economy.

As a member of the City Council it is my responsibility to work with my colleagues to identify solutions and make the tough decisions now to get us on solid footing for the future. Along with the amendments explained below, I am proud of the commitment from my colleagues and from the administration to begin working on crafting a 2022 budget that includes progressive and structural revenue options while also addressing the systemic inefficiencies in our government.

In the 2021 budget we were able to secure:

- No layoffs for 350 city union workers.
- No furloughs for non-union employees making less than \$100,000 per year.
- \$36 million in Violence Prevention which supports anti-violence programs like the Communities Partnering for Peace, who successfully intervened to suppress gang activity in the 40th Ward. This is a proactive public safety measure that keeps us safe without making the city vulnerable to police misconduct lawsuits.
- \$2 million investment in a new, historic, Non Law Enforcement First Responder model to help those dealing with a mental health crisis. This allows for law enforcement to be reallocated to focus on investigations and solving crimes, while trained professionals are available to help those experiencing mental health crises.
- Commitment to prevent borrowing from the Cannabis Tax if federal funding becomes available, so as to allow for the growth of what could be a substantial revenue stream.
- Lead service line replacement program that includes assistance for income-qualified homeowners.

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- Commitment to pass the Welcoming City ordinance independent of the budget, as conflating that with the budget vote was unnecessary

I have always welcomed the opportunity for open dialogue with 40th Ward residents on every issue that matters to our community. One of my goals as your alderman is to be transparent about the rationale behind my decisions and to be accessible for those who may have questions. To that end, I will be hosting a [virtual ward night on Monday at 6:30](#) and I invite 40th Ward neighbors to participate so we may continue these important conversations.

Again, this was not an easy decision; it is one that I reached after countless negotiations with the administration and after deliberations with my colleagues in the Progressive, Black and Latino Caucuses, and most importantly, after conversations with neighbors from all corners of the ward. My yes vote is rooted in the understanding that while the fight for a more equal Chicago is not over, we are closer to our goal. I look forward to working with my colleagues to tackle the challenges ahead and I am confident that together, we will find solutions that best serve Chicago residents.

Alderman Andre Vasquez  
Alderman – 40<sup>th</sup> Ward