

Sweet Home Chicago

The Story of an Affordable Housing Campaign



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Introduction

We would like to thank Consuella Brown, Acting President of the Woods Fund of Chicago, who encouraged us to write this paper to make sure that we captured and shared the lessons learned from the Sweet Home Chicago campaign. We would also like to thank the Marguerite Casey Foundation for their support throughout and whose Equal Voice Campaign provided the platform from which the Sweet Home Chicago Coalition and campaign was first conceived and eventually launched.

The **Sweet Home Chicago (SHC) Coalition** was comprised of nine community organizations and two labor unions that conducted a two and a half year campaign that resulted in passage of the *Vacant Building TIF Purchase Rehab Program* on May 4, 2011. This ordinance is one of the very few pieces of legislation to benefit low-income people that passed during Mayor Richard Daley's 22 years in office. SHC Coalition partners are:

Action Now	Logan Square Neighborhood Association
Albany Park Neighborhood Council	Organization of the Northeast
Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation	Service Employee International Union, Health Care Indiana/Illinois
Chicago Coalition for the Homeless	United Food and Commercial Workers, Local 881
Jane Addams Senior Caucus	
Kenwood Oakland Community Organization	
Lakeview Action Coalition	

This article was co-written by Julie Dworkin, Director of Policy, and Jim Field, Director of Organizing, at the **Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH)**. The Sweet Home Chicago campaign grew out of CCH's 2008 Strategic Plan, and from the beginning, was seen internally at CCH as an equal partnership between the community organizing and public policy departments. CCH provided the core day-to-day staffing for the campaign. Staffing from both departments included Eithne McMenamin, Drea Hall, and Dollie Brewer, as well as Jim and Julie.

We also thank the Marguerite Casey Foundation, which provided two grants totaling \$55,000 to subsidize the campaign's shared expenses, including buses, printed materials, and a media consultant. The Wieboldt Foundation also provided encouragement and support.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI) provided indispensable legal and consulting advice throughout the campaign. Also, the following community groups and unions provided key support, although they were not members of the SHC Steering Committee:

Brighton Park Neighborhood Council	Metropolitan Tenants Organization
Community Renewal Society	SOUL
Illinois Housing Council	Unite HERE Local 1
Jewish Council on Urban Affairs	

Above all, the Sweet Home campaign was a successful collaboration of the 11 SHC Steering Committee members.

This paper is divided into two parts. The first is written by Jim Field and reviews the design and building of the SHC Coalition as well as its structures and processes. The second, written by Julie Dworkin, covers the campaign itself, the policy development, and the lessons learned

Executive Summary

Part 1: Building a Coalition

The Beginning: In 2008, after a two-year effort with the Marguerite Casey Foundation's Equal Voice campaign, the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless (CCH) during strategic planning to launch an affordable housing campaign at the city level. However, because staff was well aware of the extreme difficulty of passing any community-based initiative through Chicago's City Council – in particular, an initiative that focused on affordable housing – it was decided that CCH should take its time and do it right. In preparation, CCH staff did the following:

- Interviewed 16 aldermen to explore potential support for an affordable housing ordinance, and to identify possible sponsors.
- Knowing it was impossible for CCH to accomplish this task alone, the staff decided that it should build a coalition. To do this, 31 potential partners were interviewed to explore their interest in a city campaign.
- A serious examination of best practices for coalition structure was launched. This included interviews of those who had led or participated in successful city coalitions, as well as an analysis of the experience of CCH's community organizing director's own experience working 35 years in Chicago.

Several conclusions were reached and implemented:

- **A successful coalition is built upon the right structure.** A clear set of principles articulating the way the coalition would function was written down, discussed and voted on by the Steering Committee at its first meeting. These principles were followed closely during the entire two-year campaign.
- **Who sits on the Steering Committee or key decision-making body is crucial.** Invited to the table were 11 other organizations with a strong organizing culture – groups that have moved a base and are comfortable with direct action campaigns.
- **Transparency in decision-making is crucial to creating ownership for coalition partners.** Also important is guaranteeing **equal opportunity for public roles** at press conferences, rallies and meetings.

Innovations that increased the effectiveness of the Sweet Home Chicago Coalition and increased ownership by its members included:

- Sweet Home developed an innovative strategy that built and maintained momentum as well as each partner's sense of ownership by asking each partner group to lead a monthly action, with support from the other partners. Each month a different group would organize a big event in its neighborhood that raised the profile of the campaign locally and gave the sponsoring organization an opportunity to develop leaders and local press.
- Sweet Home went to great lengths to develop mechanisms for joint decision-making, not only at monthly Steering Committee meetings, but in-between. This included a multi-partner **Negotiating Team** empowered to make emergency decisions. In one instance, a Sunday night conference call involved 25 people calling in from home to make one of the most significant decisions of the campaign – and deciding the matter within 90 minutes.
- Attendance at monthly Steering Committee meetings was reliable and constant, though no reminder calls were ever made during the two-year campaign. We credit strong ownership our partner organizations felt because of collaborative strategies listed above.

Part 2: The Campaign

The second section of the report deals with key strategic elements that contributed to the campaign's success, lessons learned, and what we won.

Key Strategic Elements include:

- **Research and Policy:** Staff from the Campaign did in-depth research on tax-increment financing (TIF) districts, the city's use of TIF funds for affordable housing, and the laws surrounding the use of TIF.
- **Messaging and Media:** Strong messaging around TIF as corporate welfare as well as the impact of the foreclosure crisis helped to build support for the Campaign. The Campaign also kept a constant media presence at the City Council and branded the campaign name.
- **Aggressive Action:** When faced with obstacles, the Campaign never retreated, but rather always responded with aggressive action, including going after targets through door knocking and phone banking in key wards and pushing the issue in the City Council, including a rarely-done "motion to discharge."
- **Turnout:** Having a packed City Council chamber every month with strongly invested leaders was critical to our success.
- **Inside/Outside Strategy:** Pushing from the outside was combined with regular meetings between the Campaign, the sponsors and the Daley Administration.

Lessons Learned include:

- **Holes in our base of support:** We did not have a strong base on the South Side of Chicago, which became problematic when the administration began targeting South Side aldermen to oppose the ordinance.
- **Messaging around affordable housing:** We struggled to get people to understand that affordable housing in their neighborhood does not mean an increase in crime and a lowering of property values.
- **Access to information about city council rules:** Because legislation in the City Council almost never moved forward if Mayor Daley opposed it, few aldermen had a good understanding of the process for moving an ordinance. Aldermen working with the administration were able to use parliamentary maneuvers to block the ordinance from moving forward.
- **One lead sponsor:** Having only one lead sponsor on the ordinance left the sponsoring alderman vulnerable to pressure and without adequate support at key moments.

Our Victories:

We won a change in the affordability requirements for housing developments that receive TIF funding. For TIF-funded rental housing, now 10% of the units must be targeted at households earning less than 50% of area median income for a family of four.

We won the passage of an ordinance that offers developers of foreclosed multi-family rental buildings TIF funding to cover up to 50% of the cost of purchase and rehab if they make half the units in the building affordable to households making less than 50% of area median income.

PART 1: Building a Coalition

The Beginning

There are two roots of the Sweet Home Chicago coalition: The first root involves the Marguerite Casey Foundation, and the second was CCH's strategic planning process in 2008.

CCH worked almost two years with the Casey Foundation and its Midwest grantees to organize a regional conference for low-wage families, held Sept. 6, 2008 at Navy Pier in Chicago. CCH helped organize a Casey Town Hall in April 2008 with seven other groups, including Logan Square Neighborhood Association and Kenwood Oakland Community Organization. It was during this process that the idea of doing a collaborative housing campaign was conceived. It was unclear whether this would be at the city or state level however.

Because of this work, LSNA and KOCO eventually became the first partners in the Sweet Home Chicago Coalition. The relationships we developed mirror Casey's Equal Voice indicators of progress: Our new housing coalition developed a strong network, with a broader base of leaders, and marshaled the organizational capacity to make a policy impact on affordable housing development in Chicago.

The second root was CCH's 2008 strategic planning process. During one of the earliest meetings in that process, eight staff gathered and decided to propose a city campaign based around affordable housing.

I was very concerned, because I knew how difficult passing anything at the city level would be, let alone an ordinance around affordable housing. I wasn't sure if anyone else at the organization understood this other than Ed Shurna, our executive director. Ed and I had been active in trying to impact Chicago public housing for nine years. We found that the Daley Administration was determined to demolish vast public housing complexes that impeded gentrification efforts in the city's central core. I admit, the phrase "beating your head against a brick wall" sprang to my mind.

As the most recent addition to the CCH management team, I recognized that CCH had an excellent staff. However, its expertise was in Springfield, where our staff had been extremely successful in leveraging dollars and policy changes for their homeless constituency for more than a decade. Chicago and Springfield are two very different animals. Springfield is indeed a legislative body, while Chicago was run by an all-powerful mayor who accepted only nominal input from aldermen. And no one, not the mayor or even the aldermen, wanted 'affordable' housing in their wards or neighborhoods.

As I reflected on this goal and tried to look into my crystal ball and gaze into the future, I could see a faint light at the end of the tunnel. My hope was that it was a victory, but my suspicion was it was a train! Either way I knew that to have any chance of success we had to bring as much focused power to the table as possible.

I also knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that there was no way that we could achieve the passage of an affordable housing bill on our own. It would be better to add up the amount of

money we would spend in a multi-year campaign on staff and other expenses and simply donate that amount to the city with the request that they use it on housing for homeless families.

That left the possibility of either getting one of the current coalitions in Chicago to adopt our campaign or build a coalition of our own. My first choice was the former. Unfortunately, my first pick, the Grassroots Collaborative, ended up choosing another direction and the second-choice coalition proved not to be a good fit.

A Bit of History

There is a scene in *The Godfather* where Michael Corleone, having assassinated key members of other crime syndicate families, thereby solidifying his power, is greeted in his father's old den by other mobsters who respectfully kiss his ring.

I often think of this scene when I reflect on Mayor Richard M. Daley. Mayor Daley solidified his power in 1995 after winning his second full term as mayor of the city of Chicago. In the days leading up to this election, Daley still had to 'earn' his votes. Community organizations took advantage of this vulnerability, pushing hard for and winning two of the final issue campaigns to pass during this period: Community Policing by the Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety (CANS) and an affordable housing ordinance by the Chicago Rehab Network. Since then, the victories had been slim.

There was the Living Wage Campaign and the Big Box Living Wage Campaign (later vetoed by the mayor) and Balanced Development – not much over 15 years. Daley regularly got his way in the City Council, with votes of 49-1 or 50-0. In one case, a vote of 45-5 so angered the mayor that, red-faced and sputtering, he threatened the five brave souls who dared to challenge his rule.

It is in this context that CCH began its pursuit of a coalition to tackle a new affordable housing ordinance.

Building a Powerful Coalition

As it became clearer that we would have to build our own coalition, I decided that I would do three things to inform my thinking:

1. Analyze my own organizing experiences with coalitions: What worked, what didn't work, and what lessons had I learned?
2. Do extensive interviews and pick the brains of other organizers in Chicago who have led or participated in coalitions to see what they have learned. **
3. Read the book *Sword of Justice*, written by Amanda Tattersall, a community and labor organizer who had studied three effective labor/community coalitions, including Chicago's Grassroots Collaborative.

** The interviews were a part of a more extensive listening tour that included aldermen, developers, community organizations, and unions to see what their housing needs were.

Following is a complete list of the groups and individuals that CCH met with during this nine month process in 2008:

<i>Alderman Sharon Dixon</i>	Jenny Awarde, <i>Albany Park Neighborhood Council (APNC)</i>	Audrey Thomas, <i>Executive Director of Deborah's Place</i>	John Peller, <i>Director of Government Relations for AIDS Foundation of Chicago</i>
<i>Alderman Pat Dowell</i>	Joy Aruguete, Executive Director, and Marla Bramble, Organizer for <i>Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation (BRC)</i>	Melanie Anewishki, <i>Executive Director of Featherfist</i>	Tom Walsh, <i>Balanced Development</i>
<i>Alderman Bob Fioretti</i>	Patrick Brosnan, <i>Brighton Park Neighborhood Council (BPNC)</i>	Andy Geer, <i>Vice President and Executive Director of Heartland Housing, Inc.</i>	<i>Business and Professional People in the Public Interest</i>
<i>Alderman Toni Foulkes</i>	<i>Jane Adams Senior Caucus</i>	<i>InnerVoice</i>	Ralph Martire, <i>Center for Tax and Budget Accountability</i>
<i>Alderman Sandi Jackson</i>	<i>Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization</i>	Lisa Kuklinski, <i>Mercy Housing Lakefront</i>	<i>Chicago Rehab Network</i>
<i>Alderman Richard Mell</i>	Jen Ritter, <i>Lakeview Action Council (LAC)</i>	<i>REST</i>	<i>Community Renewal Society</i>
<i>Alderman Emma Mitts</i>	Nancy Aardema, <i>Logan Square Neighborhood Association (LSNA)</i>	Teresa Cortass, <i>Executive Director of the Salvation Army Evangeline Booth Lodge</i>	Dan Burke, <i>For-Profit Affordable Housing Developer with the Chicago Community Development Corporation (CCDC)</i>
<i>Alderman Joe Moore</i>	<i>Metropolitan Alliance of Congregations</i>	<i>St. Leonard's House</i>	Jack Markowski, <i>former Commissioner for the Chicago Department of Housing</i>
<i>Alderman Ricardo Munoz</i>	John Bartlett, <i>Metropolitan Tenant's Organization (MTO)</i>		Tom Balanoff, <i>Service Employees International Union (SEIU)</i>
<i>Alderman Toni Preckwinkle</i>	<i>Organization of the Northeast (O.N.E.)</i>		
<i>Alderman Ariel Reboyras</i>	Jeff Bartow, <i>Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP)</i>		
<i>Alderman Brendan Reilly</i>	<i>Target</i>		
<i>Alderman Helen Shiller</i>	Nick Brunick, <i>United Power (UP)</i>		
<i>Alderman LaTasha Thomas</i>			
<i>Alderman JoAnn Thompson</i>			
<i>Alderman Scott Waguespack</i>			

Analyzing My Own Experiences with Coalitions

Working as a community organizer in Chicago for 35 years, I have participated in quite a few coalition efforts, most of them very successful. But I learned to pay attention to coalition structure after participating in one coalition so lacking in structure, that I often felt like I was

driving a car with a broken steering column! It required incredible energy and effort simply to keep that coalition on the road as it weaved far to the left, then the right.

Meetings in that coalition often ran three hours, yet the decisions made were frequently ignored. Lone activists sat at the table with individuals who represented powerful organizations – groups that brought significant resources of money and people to the table – yet inexplicably, both had an equal vote. Endless hours were spent debating issues that a first-year organizer learns early on, such as the need to negotiate and selecting winnable issues. The city did not have to divide and conquer the members of that particular coalition – the coalition did that job itself.

I did not want to repeat this experience. To do so would insure that our new coalition would fail. I had learned some hard lessons that I intended to apply to Sweet Home Chicago:

- The right structure is important! Indeed it is **the** foundation upon which a successful coalition is built.
- Who you invite to the table – in particular, who sits on the Steering Committee – is critical to the success of a coalition and will determine the amount of needless nonsense you will deal with. We determined that we would invite organizations with a strong organizing culture that understood power, moved a base, and were comfortable with direct action campaigns.

Transparency – I feel strongly that in many coalitions, it is too often unclear who made a key decision or how the decision was made. This undermines the ownership people should feel. I wanted to create a structure in which decision-making was as transparent and inclusive as possible.

I also spent a lot of time thinking about how to build as much ownership as possible from the individual groups. How do you make people **want** to participate as fully as possible? To inform this decision, I listed those things that I thought people wanted from a coalition, including:

- To win a victory that benefits their constituency.
- To raise the profile of their organization and develop leaders and staff.
- Face-time at events, actions, and in the media.
- To receive credit and improved relations with funders, political figures, and others in power.
- Participation in all decision-making. If you are going to do the work, you need to be there when decisions are made.

To solve these issues we built a Steering Committee that would make all key decisions of the campaign. We went to great lengths to develop mechanisms for joint decision-making, not only at Steering Committee meetings but also in between. This included a multi-partner **Negotiating Team** empowered to make any emergency decisions. And we became very adept at phone conferences conducted in a timely manner, which gave everyone an equal say in a final decision. In one instance on a Sunday night, 25 people all from their own homes or on mobile phones made one of the most significant decisions of the campaign and did so in 90 minutes, with all participating.

We tried to spread around the roles at press conferences, actions, and meetings as much as possible. We even kept a tally sheet in the early part of the campaign. Later, when the pace

increased dramatically, we did not do as well spreading around the roles, relying too much on the same leaders. Also, we always put CCH as a contact on the press releases, so CCH was always called afterwards to comment and therefore became too much the voice of SHC in the press. We should have spread the contact name around to different organizations.

SHC developed an innovative strategy that built and maintained momentum as well as the partners' sense of ownership. The Steering Committee agreed that each partner organization would take a particular month to manage an action. These actions raised the profile of the campaign as well as the individual organizations. They also focused on targets, got press, and allowed a partner's leaders and staff to develop. A lead organization produced 50-plus people and each of the other organizations were required to produce at least 5 or 10, although many generally did more. In this way we usually had 200 to 250 people at monthly events without putting too much pressure on any one group.

One of the hallmarks of the SHC Coalition was the depth of ownership that groups demonstrated. This was mentioned repeatedly during the campaign, to some of our shared funders, and during a May 10 retreat and debriefing attended by more than 40 individuals. Not one turnout call was done by CCH staff to partner organizations, yet the same 22 to 25 people were around the table each month for SHC Steering Committee meetings.

“Picking the Brains” of Others

Having determined structure is important, we wanted to “pick the brains” of others who had led citywide coalitions. We also wanted to hear from our potential partners on what they considered the ideal ‘rules’ of a coalition, based upon their own experiences.

With this in mind, we designed a questionnaire and proceeded to interview organizers across Chicago. Madeline Talbott of Action Now and Nancy Aardema of Logan Square Neighborhood Association were particularly helpful, generous with their time, and honest with their responses. Madeline was a leader in the Living Wage and the Big Box Living Wage coalitions, and Nancy was a leader of the Balanced Development campaign. Also helpful was Ken Snyder, lead organizer of the Grass Roots Collaborative during its Big Box Campaign and Tom Walsh, who staffed the Balanced Development campaign.

We decided to adopt some standards employed by other coalitions, such as requiring each partner to produce a busload of people when needed and paying \$1,000 a year to subsidize the campaign. We also invited key labor allies, such as SEIU, a move pioneered by the Living Wage campaign. This proved decisive in our success. Other issues raised in the interviews were:

- People who successfully led campaigns said that it was critical that a campaign be managed by at least two people who had each other's backs. Our solution was that Julie Dworkin and I would manage this for CCH as an equal partnership.
- Problems: Numerous people indicated that a lack of momentum in a campaign is a major problem. They said there would be high points and then nothing would happen for a while. These ups and downs were resolved for Balanced Development when it hired a person to staff the campaign. Julie and I decided to solve this by staffing the SHC Coalition with five CCH staff members, two from policy and three from organizing. We also employed the monthly actions mentioned earlier.

Sword of Justice

My final plan was to read Amanda Tattersall's *Sword of Justice*, which analyzes three successful labor/community coalitions in three countries. The primary lesson I took from her book was the importance of building and maintaining strong partner relationships for the success of a coalition.

Because strong relationships are one of the building blocks of any organizing project, this should have been obvious, but it was a great lesson to relearn. We incorporated it into our coalition through periodic retreats, where we emphasized relationship-building exercises. We had dinner and regular relational questions at the beginning of each Steering Committee meeting and I went out of my way to do a one-on-one with every Steering Committee member and to reconnect regularly with people.

Below is the list of principles that were fully vetted and adopted by the Steering Committee at its first meeting. These were used to govern the coalition throughout the campaign. Most decisions were made by gaining consensus. But sometimes a vote was needed to decide an issue. Each group was allowed to caucus before casting its lone vote.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE CITY CAMPAIGN

*The purpose of the coalition is to **act** on our common goals and beliefs. Each organization demonstrates its ownership by making commitments, keeping them, and being held accountable for them. All work, including media outreach, will be done in the name of the coalition, although we recognize the importance of each group being able to raise its profile around this campaign in its local area.*

*The purpose of the guidelines is to create a **simple** but clear set of principles that allow the coalition to **act** in an effective way that promotes the ability for quick decision-making and nimble action.*

- A Steering Committee will be formed comprised of community organizations and unions that commit to producing a busload of members when required, and pay \$1,000 **annually** for coalition activities. This Steering Committee will be the decision-making body for the duration of the campaign. Each organization will have one vote. No proxy voting will be permitted. Each organization will decide on its own what its process is for casting their vote but need to do so in a way that empowers its representatives at the table and does not slow down the coalition from **taking effective and quick action**.
- Each Steering Committee Organization will be required to have its involvement with the campaign vetted and voted on by at least their Board and preferably one other committee. Two leaders will be elected/appointed as part of the Steering Committee from each organization as part of this process. *At least one staff person will be assigned by each organization to attend regular meetings.*
- The Steering Committee will encourage participation of these leaders as well as at least one staff person from each organization at regular meetings.

- A day-long retreat (two if needed) will be held in early 2009 to build relationships among the organizations' staff and leaders and to lay out the strategy for the first year of the campaign. A power analysis will be part of this agenda.
- An Agenda Setting Committee will be comprised of the original three organizations (CCH, KOCO & LSNA) and will meet before the monthly meetings to craft an agenda and do the preparation required to have a successful meeting. Any Steering Committee member organization is welcome to participate, but must be willing to assign a senior staff person (e.g. Executive Director, Lead Organizer) to consistently attend the meetings.
- An Advisory Committee of policy experts, lawyers, and other non-profit leaders will be formed to assist the coalition and meet when necessary. Participants in this committee can be added/subtracted as necessary.
- A day-long retreat will be held each year, during which the previous year's efforts will be evaluated.
- A copy of all agreed-upon rules will be typed and given to each group.
- Each participating individual will be encouraged to read the newspaper and keep current of the political situation in Chicago.

Part 2: The Campaign

Key Strategic Elements

Although our Campaign did not result in the passage of the ordinance we set out to pass, we feel the amount of power we were able to build and how far the ordinance actually got – as well as the incredibly invested coalition – make this Campaign a model for city-level advocacy. This second half of the report explores the elements of our strategy that made the Campaign successful as well as the lessons learned from the campaign.

Research and Policy

The Campaign began with a year-long research effort to identify new potential funding streams at the city level to dedicate for affordable housing. Early on, a variety of funding sources were identified, including the sale of Midway Airport, capital budget funds, energy efficiency resources, and fines for slumlords. However, during the year in which our research took place, the foreclosure crisis that had already begun, intensified, and the economy collapsed. It became clear that with the city's fiscal situation, any new or existing revenue streams would have to be directed towards closing the budget hole and maintaining essential city services. Because of this, our attention turned to tax increment financing (TIF) funding. This was essentially “off the books” money that the city controlled and that could only be used for specific purposes, affordable housing being one of them. It could not be diverted for city personnel, and the city had a large surplus of TIF funds built up.

Our research on TIF funding began in earnest in the fall of 2008. Using master's level interns to do the research, CCH began a database containing in-depth information on every TIF district, including how much money was in each TIF fund, how much money had been generated and spent over the life of each TIF, what were the specific allowable uses of funds for each TIF, and which TIFs were connected to which wards.

We also began to research TIF affordable housing expenditures and gathering in-depth knowledge about how the city was using TIF funds to create affordable housing and for what income levels the housing was targeted. The research on TIF funding and housing was incorporated into a report that we used to launch the Campaign in July 2009. It provided a key statistic that was used throughout the campaign: On average, only 4% of TIF funds were being dedicated for affordable housing each year. The Sweet Home Chicago ordinance, introduced in March 2010, asked that 20 percent of TIF funding be allocated to affordable housing, almost \$100 million a year.

In-depth research on TIFs was critical because, throughout the campaign it allowed us to respond to what city officials were telling us about which TIF districts could have housing in them. It also influenced our ability to predict how much TIF funding would be available if we made changes to our proposal, for example, to exempt certain types of TIFs such as industrial ones.

The Campaign's policy staff also developed a deep understanding about the laws surrounding the use of TIF funds. This knowledge was invaluable in our negotiations with the city and our internal discussions about the ordinance and how it would or would not work.

As the Campaign continued and we shifted our focus toward restoring foreclosed properties, we were able to get detailed information about residential foreclosures within TIF districts. We used the data to demonstrate how the funds could be targeted towards those properties and provided data to aldermen about specific properties in their wards.

As the campaign moved forward, it became clear that there were a number of aspects of the policy we were proposing that were confusing to staff and leaders from organizations within the SHC Coalition. When we attended meetings with city officials, they often would make assertions that campaign members did not fully understand and therefore could not refute. So we developed an in-depth training, making it easier for more people to explain the policy we proposed as well as information to refute the city claims about why the SHC proposal would not work. These trainings were very well received by staff and leaders, who told us that they felt much more comfortable with the information afterwards.

Messaging and Media

Early in the Campaign we were able to capitalize on the growing public attention and concern about TIFs by including TIF abuse as one of our key messages. A second research report released by the SHC Coalition focused on the use of TIF as corporate welfare used by wealthy downtown corporations to rehab their offices. We showed which corporations received TIF funds for this purpose, then showed their profits during the period in which they got the funds and their chief officers' high salaries.

About nine months into the campaign we also realized that messaging focused on "affordable housing" was not getting the support of many aldermen. Thus, we very deliberately changed the message to talk about vacant and/or foreclosed properties that are magnets for crime and how TIF funds could be used to turn those buildings around. With the new messaging, we found more aldermen signing on in support as well as increased media attention. The third research report of the Campaign focused on the city's federal resource to rehab foreclosed buildings –

Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds – and how little impact those funds would have. We showed the large number of foreclosed buildings within TIF districts and how those TIFs had money that could be directed towards foreclosed properties. This change in messaging was a major turning point in the campaign.

The Campaign also worked closely with a media strategist, Mike Truppa, who met monthly with the SHC media committee to strategize how to garner coverage for the Campaign. His ability to help the Campaign churn out strong press releases, sometimes on short notice, was key a critical ingredient in developing the messaging.

CCH also used online media, with its in-house staff blogging about Sweet Home developments via articles that were posted on its website (which then averaged 25,000 visits a month) and its Facebook page (more than 900 followers by 2011). In mid-2010, CCH also created a Facebook page for SHC, which developed almost 300 friends who followed its posts and Twitter updates from key Chicago city council meetings.

Another key media strategy we used was to cultivate a relationship with a member of the *Chicago Sun-Times* editorial board, who then followed the Campaign as it progressed. We gave the Sun-Times an exclusive on the research released at the beginning of the campaign, and they decided on their own to also write an editorial in support of what we were trying to do. We came back to the same editorial board writer at two other key junctures in the campaign and she wrote three more supportive editorials.

The Campaign also kept up a consistent media presence at the city council meetings month after month. Eventually, Sweet Home Chicago became a brand name to both reporters and aldermen. Several reporters were following the Campaign regularly and writing about it each time there was a new development. It became a regular part of the discourse around the council meetings.

A significant part of the “branding” of the Campaign came from consistently displaying the logo and the name of the Campaign at all events. We had red t-shirts that all organizations wore to every event with the logo and name on them as well as buttons, posters, and a banner. We also had a signature song with rewritten lyrics to the tune of “Sweet Home Chicago” that we sang at the end of all our rallies. All of these efforts to brand campaign built unity among the different organizations in the coalition and also made Sweet Home Chicago a household name.

Aggressive Action

Doing strong, aggressive, direct action was perhaps the most effective strategy of the campaign. Whenever we ran into roadblocks or opposition we never retreated, but pushed back hard. These actions kept the campaign moving forward.

The first major roadblock of the campaign was the refusal of the joint committee chairmen, Ald. Ray Suarez and Ald. Ed Burke, to call the ordinance for a vote in the Joint Committee on Finance and Housing and Real Estate. They held a hearing on the ordinance in July 2010 to hear from proponents, but did not take a vote. So weekly throughout July and August 2010 we knocked on doors and phone banked in Suarez and Burke’s wards. We let their constituents know that their aldermen were holding up an important ordinance that would provide funds to fix

up foreclosed buildings in their neighborhoods and asked them to call their aldermen. We generated over 200 calls to their offices from constituents.

In September, Suarez and Burke held a second hearing at which they heard testimony from opponents – but Mayor Daley’s administration was the only opponent. The chairs still did not allow the ordinance to be called for a vote. Instead, Ald. Suarez called for the formation of a “Blue Ribbon Commission” to discuss the ordinance and come up with recommendations. The SHC Coalition quickly decided that the Blue Ribbon Commission was another stalling tactic. Instead of participating in it, we stepped up the pressure with visits to Ald. Suarez and Ald. Burke’s houses. Both reacted strongly to this increased pressure which we believe eventually led to a committee vote.

We also decided to move forward with a rarely used parliamentary procedure called “a motion to discharge.” If an ordinance has not been called for a vote after 60 days from the date it was referred to committee, the sponsor can make a motion from the floor to discharge the committee from responsibility for the ordinance. If 26 of the 50 aldermen approve the motion, the ordinance comes directly to the floor for a vote. Despite the fact that supporting a motion to discharge was an extremely controversial move and very antagonistic to the committee chairs, we were able to line up 23 votes in support of the motion to discharge by the November, 2010 city council meeting.

On November 3, 2010, before the city council meeting, we announced at a press conference that the lead sponsor of our ordinance, Ald. Walter Burnett, would be making the motion to discharge on the floor of the council that day. What ensued was a frantic behind-the-chamber meeting between key members of the coalition, the Mayor’s Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Ald. Burnett, and Ald. Suarez in which Ald. Suarez implored us not to go forward with the motion to discharge. Apparently Mayor Daley was extremely concerned about this action and did not want it to appear that the council was going around his authority.

We were not confident that we had the votes to pass it and figured the administration was aware of that, so we were surprised that they reacted so strongly to the idea of even bringing the motion to the floor. The only time in anyone’s memory that this had been done during Daley’s Administration was a time when Daley favored the motion to discharge. We ended up agreeing not to make the motion in exchange for a firm commitment from Burke and Suarez that we would have a committee hearing with a vote on the ordinance within two weeks. Afterwards, the hearing was scheduled for November 15 and the ordinance was approved that day by a joint committee vote of 13-8.

Although we had been diligently lining up our votes in committee and believed we had the votes to pass it, we never actually expected it to be called for a vote. We figured the Daley staff would have something up its sleeve to prevent it. But there were a couple of things we did that day and an unexpected intervention from another sponsor, Ald. Ricardo Munoz, that seemed to lead to our success.

We decided to come in to the hearing with an amended version of the ordinance which removed the sections of the ordinance which the law department had objected to most strongly at the opponents hearing. We took out a section that allowed for a lawsuit with triple damages if the

city did not comply with the ordinance and also a date when the ordinance would have gone into effect that would have required the city to spend the full \$100 million in TIF dollars in just two months. When we came into the committee hearing and our sponsor announced the substitute ordinance, we immediately threw the administration off their game and they asked for time to review the new ordinance. This resulted in a frantic meeting behind the chamber between the city of Chicago Department of Community Development and Law Department, the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and several aldermen. A few coalition members were pulled in as well to answer some technical questions for the aldermen. All told there were at least 15 people behind the chamber discussing the ordinance while the public waited. Ald. Munoz was also there with us helping to mediate the conversations. After this went on for about 20 minutes he approached Ald. Burke and told him we were essentially violating the Open Meetings Act by having the discussion about the ordinance with all these people behind closed doors. At that point, Ald. Burke brought everyone back out from behind the chamber and started the meeting that led to the affirmative vote.

After we successfully passed the ordinance out of committee, the administration started negotiating with us in earnest. But we quickly reached an impasse around the fact that the Sweet Home ordinance mandated a certain amount of TIF spending – 20 percent of unallocated TIF funds. The city introduced its own watered-down version which made the dollar amount a goal rather than a mandate, and allowed the goal to be satisfied by all kinds of funding, including federal grants.

Eventually, the Daley ordinance was voted out of committee and an amended version of ours was voted down. This was due in part to the retirement of two co-sponsors who were not there for the vote, including new Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle, and a flip-flop by five co-sponsors who back-pedaled and voted against our ordinance. After that we began a very active campaign, in December 2010 and January 2011 to expose the five aldermen who had voted against our ordinance after pledging support.

We began by hanging large signs on foreclosed buildings in TIF districts in these aldermen's wards stating that the alderman had voted against funding to fix up the buildings. We followed this up with bus tours bringing groups to their offices to demonstrate outside and pass out flyers educating their constituents about their actions. We also worked successfully to get stories about the actions in their neighborhood newspapers.

In early 2011, leading up to the city elections in February and April 2011 we wrangled with the city to bring the ordinance for a vote. We continued to go out in the wards of aldermen who opposed us, distributing flyers about their position. We distributed thousands of flyers prior to both elections. We felt that this ongoing direct action on aldermen was important to keep pressure on the Daley administration to come to the table to negotiate. We wanted aldermen to tell the mayor's office that their failure to act was affecting aldermen's re-election campaigns. It definitely kept the issue alive in the City Council, but the flyering alone was not enough to change the minds of aldermen in wards where we had no community organizations with a base.

At the January 2011 City Council meeting, just before the city elections, we decided to roll the dice and call the ordinance for a vote. We filed the necessary paperwork to call a deferred ordinance for a vote. According to City Council rules, 24-hours-notice in advance of the meeting was required. When we arrived, Ald. Burke informed our sponsor that although the city council

rules only specified 24-hour-notice, the state Open Meetings act required 48-hour-notice. We reviewed the Open Meetings Act, which seemed to require that an agenda be posted 48 hours in advance, though items could be considered that were not on the agenda.

We discussed our dilemma with Ald. Burnett and co-sponsor Ald. Joe Moore. We knew the chairmen would rule that we could not vote on the ordinance, but there was the option of challenging the ruling of the chair. We knew this would not go over well with aldermen and we would lose the motion to dispute it. We were faced with the option of losing that vote or just sitting by and being thwarted and doing nothing. While we were discussing this, a lawyer from Business and Professional People for the Public Interest had gone down to the city clerk's office to look for notices that Ald. Burke had filed about voting on deferred items to see if they had been filed with 48 hours-notice. He quickly found four that had been filed with less than the required 48 hours, yet the items had been voted on. Armed with that information, we decided to make the aggressive move and challenge the ruling of the chair.

Ald. Moore stood up and very eloquently cited the Open Meetings Act and the vagueness of the language, then read off the notices posted by Ald. Burke with less than 48 hours-notice. Ald. Burke turned quite red. His only defense was to say that yes he had done it, but no one called him on it at the time, so the votes proceeded. The motion to challenge the chair failed as we expected, but we left the chamber chanting "Call Sweet Home (for a vote)" and "We vote, too".

The shake-up at the council meeting resulted in strong coverage on ABC-TV Channel 7. It aired a 2-minute story during the meeting and a three and a half minute story on the evening news. Reporters talked about the underhanded way the Daley Administration tried to block our ordinance. There was also coverage on WLS Radio, WBEZ Public Radio and the online news sites Gaper's Block and Huffington Post. The news pieces carried our messages perfectly. Once again, our aggressive action had a big payoff.

Turnout

Another key element of our success was our ability to turn out hundreds of leaders to the City Council meetings and hearings month after month. It was hard to keep morale up in the Campaign as we were thwarted at every turn by the administration, but the organizers kept leaders invested in the effort and they made time in their schedules to sit through lengthy council meetings every month. Organizers for the Campaign believe that a key reason people came out every month was that we were able to clearly communicate the message that our tax dollars were going to corporations and not benefitting us. This angered people and motivated them to come out. Also, the issue was very personal for a lot of the leaders as they were struggling to afford housing.

Having our leaders in their brightly-colored T-shirts fill the chamber at every campaign hearing and almost every City Council meeting for more than a year had a huge impact on aldermen. It contributed to making the campaign high profile for the public and media.

Inside/Outside strategy

Another successful Campaign strategy was that we always had an inside track with the Administration in which we were trying to work out a deal from within as we were pushing from

the outside. Ald. Burnett was committed from the very beginning to try to come to an agreement with the administration on the ordinance. We began meeting with the Department of Community Development (DCD) very early on in the Campaign, before we even introduced the ordinance. We had a series of very substantive meetings with DCD staff as well as staff from the Mayor's office. Ald. Burnett continued throughout the Campaign to have an ongoing dialogue with the administration.

We did ultimately have some negotiating meetings with the administration. We had a representative from every coalition partner on the negotiating team empowered to make decisions for the group. This allowed the entire coalition to feel they had input into these crucial decisions. We did come to some agreements in those sessions, but ultimately could not reach consensus with the Administration on some key issues. However, having this ongoing dialogue helped us to understand clearly which parts of the ordinance the administration could support and what parts were problematic. This allowed us to continue to amend the ordinance to make it a more practical and realistic document from the standpoint of those who would be implementing it, even if we never came to an agreement on all provisions.

Lessons Learned

Holes in our base of support

When we first formed the coalition, two strong community organizations on the southwest side of Chicago declined our invitation to be partners because their work was heavily focused on preventing households from going into foreclosure and also there were not a lot of TIFs in their communities. None of our partners represented large portions of the city's South Side. This ended up being a major weakness for the Campaign. Our most vocal opposition to the ordinance came from South Side aldermen and we did not have the base in their communities to move them into our camp or keep them there.

One way we could have dealt with these gaps was to use other ally organization in those areas who were not Steering Committee members of the coalition, but who had relationships with aldermen. However, another weakness of the campaign was that we did not put enough energy into building our list of endorsing allies and activating that list. We ended up with 65 endorsing organizations, but there were probably hundreds of other potential ones. We also did not keep in good communication with the endorsers to let them know how they could support the campaign. The main reason we failed to do this was due to the rapid pace of the campaign in its second year. There were so many moving pieces to track that we had no time to do this additional outreach.

Messaging around affordable housing

Another issue we had with South Side aldermen was that many of them felt that their wards had been negatively impacted by the redevelopment of public housing. Former public housing residents had been given Housing Choice Vouchers and many of them moved from high rises to equally segregated and poor neighborhoods on the South Side. The perception of the aldermen was that these voucher-holders had contributed to increased crime in their communities. When they heard that the Sweet Home Chicago ordinance would increase affordable housing in their

neighborhoods, they immediately equated that with more crime and decreased property values. The administration was able to play on this fear and use it to their advantage by telling them that all the housing would end up in their wards because North Side aldermen would not want it. We were not successful in changing the debate around what affordable housing can mean, who the families are that live in it, and how it can improve the community. We were never able to get these aldermen past their stereotypes and fears.

Access to information about City Council rules

Throughout the Campaign we struggled to get good, clear information about the rules for City Council. Because almost every significant piece of legislation that passed the council was introduced by the administration and shepherded through by Ald. Burke, few other aldermen knew the parliamentary rules for moving and passing ordinances. In addition, almost every ordinance passed without opposition so the rules were basically glossed over and things moved through effortlessly because no one was paying attention to whether everything was done according to the book.

The rules of the Chicago City Council are posted online, but there is also state law that dictates how things work in the City Council. Just reading the rules does not answer a lot of basic questions about the way things work.

We contacted many people to get information about the rules of the city council, but ultimately found that the people we expected to be most knowledgeable were unclear about the rules or unwilling to help us. We ultimately decided to rely on information from the City Clerk's office because the Clerk attended all the council meetings and was keeper of the rules. The first bad information we received was that the notice required to call up a deferred ordinance was 24 hours. This was clearly stated in the rules of the City Council and was confirmed for us by the clerk and the city's legislative reference bureau. However, Ald. Burke invoked the state Open Meetings Act, which was vague at best and a rule that he himself did not follow. This is a perfect example of how legislation without opposition passes without scrutiny, but when our opponents want to block something, new, obscure rules appear.

After that incident, our contacts in the clerk's office and the legislative reference bureau were very embarrassed and apologetic about the error. We figured it was an isolated incident. Unwisely, we continued to go to the clerk's office and received two more bad pieces of information about the number of votes needed to pass an ordinance and about the fact that a deferred ordinance had to be voted on when it was brought back up at a City Council meeting. We clearly should have stopped listening to this contact after the second error and found another source. It turned out that, among all the aldermen we talked with, Ald. Moore was the most knowledgeable about the rules, though he still had gaps in his knowledge. However, we should have gone to him earlier for help.

We never were able to figure out why the information we got from the clerk was incorrect about very basic matters that should have been simple to answer. It seems that he was reporting to us based on his observation of the way things were done rather than the letter of the law. In other words, in the 99.99% of cases in which ordinances have no opposition, things happen a certain way which he described for us. We were basing our decisions on this information. However,

once ordinances are opposed, they are held to different standards and more efforts are made to block them, which results in things happening that are not the norm.

One lead sponsor

Early on in the campaign we had hoped to have three key aldermen leading the effort. We initially signed on Ald. Burnett and Ald. Manny Flores as lead sponsors, but Ald. Flores was appointed to a state position in fall 2009, before the ordinance was introduced, so we ended up with Ald. Burnett as the only sponsor.

There were several problems that developed as a result of this. The primary one was that he became very vulnerable as a target for the Administration. When things got very heated in the campaign, with the SHC Coalition pushing for a vote before the elections and the Administration fighting it, the Administration threatened to take away TIF funding from a very important project for Ald. Burnett. As this pressure mounted, Ald. Burnett ultimately felt extreme pressure to work with the Administration in order to keep TIF funding for this project. This stalled the ordinance at the last meeting before the April 5, 2011 runoff election. If we had other lead aldermen, we could have had one of them pick up the ball when Ald. Burnett felt he needed to back off.

In addition, Ald. Burnett struggled to maintain his relationships with the Chicago City Council Black Caucus, of which he was the chairman. The administration targeted the black caucus to create opposition to the ordinance by playing on their fears around who lives in affordable housing. Ultimately, the Caucus turned on him completely and he ended up resigning from his position as chair. Again, if we had more African American aldermen in leadership in the campaign, it would have helped him negotiate those relationships more effectively.

Another issue that resulted from only one lead sponsor was that we didn't have multiple skill sets from which to draw. Ald. Burnett was a tireless fighter and a great speaker from the floor. However, he was not as knowledgeable about technical aspects of the council and not as comfortable with the complicated parliamentary maneuvers required to keep things moving when there is opposition. It would have been good to have another aldermanic sponsor to bolster Ald. Burnett's confidence when we had to make complicated motions.

Our Victories:

Increase Affordability for TIF-funded Housing

The first victory of the Campaign happened unexpectedly during the hearing at which the committee voted down our compromise ordinance and voted in favor of the Daley administration's ordinance without a mandate. We had been having conversations with Ald. Helen Shiller throughout the Campaign about the ordinance and we were often at odds about whether we were taking the right approach, but we did share the same goals in creating more affordable housing. Alderman Shiller, who represented the Uptown community had been a long-time fighter for affordable housing. At some point during our back and forth, Ald. Shiller decided to introduce an amendment to the city's Affordable Requirements Ordinance passed by the Balanced Development Coalition.

Her amendment proposed to lower the income requirements for affordable housing in market rate rental housing developments receiving TIF funds. The requirement had been that they had to create 20% of the units for households earning 60% of area median income (\$45,000 for a family of four). The change was to require that 10% of the units be for households earning 60% of area median income and another 10% had to be for households earning less than 50% of area median income (\$37,500 for a family of four).

The amendment passed without any debate or question at the hearing at which everyone was focused on the debate between the competing versions of the Sweet Home Chicago ordinance. It then passed unanimously at the next City Council meeting. It was amazing that the ordinance passed with no debate because the Balanced Development Coalition had pushed hard to lower the income targets before the ordinance passed and it had been rejected. This amendment never would have passed if not for the work of the Sweet Home Chicago coalition both in terms of creating an environment where there was a strong push to do something on affordable housing which motivated Ald. Shiller to act and also by distracting the administration from opposing Shiller's ordinance because of the bigger issue at stake.

TIF Funds for Rehab of Foreclosed Buildings

Our main victory also was reached unexpectedly, after our ordinance was tabled before the runoff election. We refer to it as “the toothpaste coming out the other end of the tube.” This means that the Daley Administration tended to act in a way similar to what happens when one pushes and pushes to get the toothpaste out the top of the tube, but it ends up coming out the wrong end. In other words, we were pushing for one thing to which Daley never agreed. Then at the last minute, Daley introduced something similar and took credit for it.

At the March 2011 city council meeting, Daley quietly introduced another alternative ordinance (TIF Vacant Building Rehab Ordinance) to allow homebuyers to access TIF funds to purchase and rehab vacant buildings. This was certainly a reaction to our Campaign, but it did not accomplish many of the goals we were striving to realize, including its sole focus on home ownership by higher-income families. We briefly considered trying to amend it to include rental properties, but we felt at that point in the campaign, after the elections were over, that we really had no leverage.

We were set to hold a mid-April 2011 press conference criticizing Daley for once again doing too little, too late, when the mayor's ordinance unexpectedly got stalled in the Finance Committee. Ald. Burnett took the Administration to task for introducing the ordinance without consulting community groups or aldermen supporting Sweet Home Chicago. Other aldermen chimed in about the lack of communication with aldermen about the ordinance. When the time came for a motion to pass it, no one spoke up.

We seized this moment and decided to push for an amendment to Daley's ordinance. We drafted two proposed amendments, one that would allow a homebuyer buying a two to four-flat to get more TIF funds if they made the rental units in the building affordable. The other would allow developers to get up to 50% of the cost to purchase and rehab a multi-family vacant property from TIF funds if they made up to 50% of the units affordable. Under our amendment the

affordable units would have to be targeted at a family of four making less than \$37,500. The original ordinance that Daley introduced was targeted at families of four earning \$75,000.

Ald. Burnett approached Commissioner Andrew Mooney of the Department of Housing and Economic Development, who recently was appointed by Mayor-elect Rahm Emmanuel to continue in the position. Commissioner Mooney's comment to Ald. Burnett was that he did not want to fight with Sweet Home Chicago. He also was previously the director of an organization committed to developing affordable housing. He quickly adopted the second amendment and agreed to include it in Daley's ordinance. In just a few short days, the amendment was adopted in committee and passed unanimously on the council floor on May 4, 2011.

We were very encouraged by the collaborative spirit that Commissioner Mooney showed in quickly working with us on the amendment. We took it as a signal that the new administration would be more open to working with community groups. We plan to figure out ways to expand on this victory and achieve the original goal of Sweet Home Chicago, which was to create an increase in dedicated city funding to address the needs for affordable housing and rehab of foreclosed properties.

Conclusion

We believe that anyone who participated in Sweet Home Chicago would agree that this was one of the most intense, fast-paced campaigns any of us ever experienced. We were constantly turning out people for events or preparing for important hearings and meetings. It often felt like we were groping in the dark, not knowing what to expect next. In the end, there was a great deal of disappointment that we never got a vote on our own ordinance. However, I feel, and I hope others will agree, that the experience we gained will be invaluable for any city-level initiative moving forward. In addition, I think the ordinance we passed and the collaborative fashion in which we passed it sets a great foundation for creating more affordable housing and future work with the city on this issue. Finally, we are all extremely proud of the power we built and the attention we brought to a critical issue that is facing Chicago and that is not going away soon.

Addendum

Since the first draft of this report was written, the Sweet Home Chicago coalition has begun meetings with the Department of Housing and Economic Development to work on implementation of the TIF Vacant Building Rehab Ordinance. So far the meetings have been very productive and collaborative as we work through ways to make the ordinance as effective as possible. The most significant thing that has come out of the meetings is that the plan for implementation includes dedicating specific TIF funds in a number of TIFs just for the rehab of vacant buildings to create affordable housing. Because they have designed the program this way, we have moved much closer to the original goals of Sweet Home Chicago. We will now have dedicated TIF funds to address foreclosures and affordable housing. The housing created with those TIF funds will be targeted at lower income individuals and families than what was required before, and a higher percentage of the units in each building will be affordable. As we work to expand the number of TIFs that will have the program and the dollars dedicated in those TIFs, we can move towards the goal of \$100 million in dedicated funding.