



October 5, 2023

## On the Migrant Crisis, the Mayor, and the lack of a Plan

If we were to poll the residents of the City of Chicago, we'd get a mixed view of the migrants crisis (and indeed it is a crisis).

Some would be against taking in and providing for migrants, period; feeling that not enough is being done for Chicagoans (such as the homeless and others in need) who have been ignored for years and as citizens deserve priority assistance.

Others will take the position which the Mayor has, that as a sanctuary city we will provide for migrants; stressing the importance of helping asylum seekers. The belief is that, with assistance from the state and federal government, we can address this ongoing influx of migrants.

There are others, who believe in providing assistance to migrants, but also believe that resources are limited and therefore believe that we cannot and should not accept an endless number of busloads of migrants arriving daily.

Others view this crisis politically, feeling that we should not allow Republican governors, such as Texas' Abbott to foist this problem on Democrat states and cities to cause chaos that can be taken advantage of in the 2024 election cycle.

These perspectives run the gamut, but regardless of one's viewpoint, we collectively have a major crisis on our hands, with budget deficits at all levels and other major agenda items requiring attention.

**Taking all of this into consideration, COAL believes we can all agree that after five months in Office, the Mayor should have laid out a plan or an approach to handling this crisis and communicated said plan or approach to Chicagoans, via townhalls and/or fireside chats and/or leveraging major and community media outlets.**

**We don't expect for the Mayor (along with the Governor) to solve the migrant crisis quickly, however, we do expect to see them demonstrating that they are putting their best minds on the crisis and that this is reflected in well-communicated plans.**

So, we'll help the Mayor with a few suggestions for his administration's much needed and rightfully expected plan(s) to address this crisis:

### **Tracking Migrants / Transparency**

1) A plan should include the development of a dash board, accessible by the public, that tracks all incoming migrants. We want to know that the Mayor has a handle on the number of migrants and their demographics: total numbers as they arrive, number of men, by age, number of women, by age, and numbers of children (boys and girls) by age, and families, as well as places of origin;

- 2) This dash board should be updated with every busload of migrants, as they arrive;
- 3) Clearly, migrants should be tracked by location, across those said demographics. This should also be information shared via a dashboard or portal, accessible by the public;

## Finances

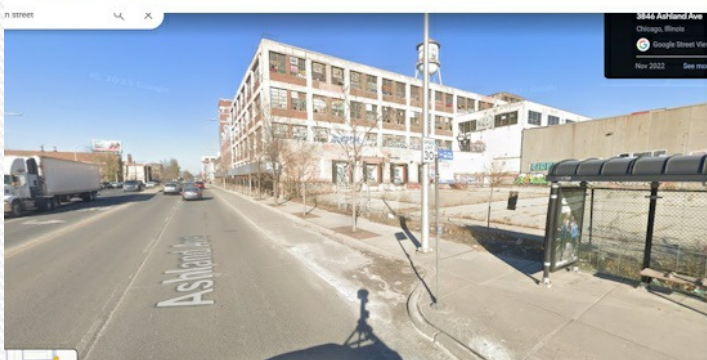
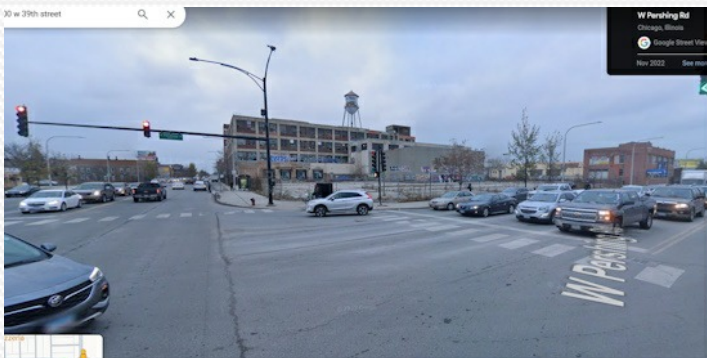
- 4) A plan should include a projection of per migrant costs for housing, food, healthcare, etc.;
- 5) There should be a rolling projection of total costs; providing Chicagoans with an understanding of the growing costs of supporting migrants;
- 6) We should be apprised of the sources of funds expended on migrants; what tradeoffs are being made and how migrant costs are increasing budget deficits;
- 7) A plan should include tracking of all expenditures, updated on a weekly or monthly basis;
- 8) We should be made aware of all contracts that are let in support of migrants (Chicago businesses and organizations should benefit from the millions being expended to support migrants);
- 9) There should be a projection of what numbers of migrants becomes unworkable, thus projecting when other Illinois cities and towns must take on its fair share of migrants;
- 10) And more importantly, when Chicago and Illinois must begin turning back buses to Texas or other originating states; clearly Chicago cannot support an unending influx of busloads migrants;

## Housing

11) Recognizing that we cannot truly know the backgrounds of arriving migrants, migrants should not be housed in the midst of our families and our children, causing problems for our neighborhoods, which leads us to where should migrants actually be located.

There are a large number of industrial corridors in Chicago with vacant warehouses. These warehouses, at a reasonably safe distance from residential neighborhoods, can be converted to house large numbers of migrants, and given sufficient space can also house classrooms for migrant children.

The following picture is a warehouse situated near the cross section of 39th and Ashland. Both streets are multi-lane, creating a natural barrier between the location of migrants and nearby residents;





12) This warehouse and similar facilities could house a large number of migrants. Why is this important? The more scattered migrants are housed, the less easily tracked and the more easily individual migrants will escape into our communities, creating other longer-term issues and an increased burden on city systems;

13) A plan must include a housing strategy and mapped migrant facilities;

### **Healthcare**

14) Plans must include a means of providing healthcare for migrants;

15) Cook County Health should be tasked with developing this portion of the plan, along with projected costs;

16) Again, if migrants are housed in fewer, but larger facilities, it should make it easier and less costly to provide on-site healthcare support;

### **Safety and Security**

17) Additionally, the fewer locations migrants are housed, the easier for the Chicago Police Department to develop a plan to monitor migrants and minimize crime caused by migrants;

18) Regularly scheduled patrols could be established for these fewer locations;

19) Additionally, CPD, along with local FBI must look into very real concerns that the drug cartels are infiltrating Chicago under the cover of bused in migrants;

20) CPD should track migrant crime and generate reporting for the city council, Police District Councils and the public;

21) A plan must include safety/security strategies developed by CPD; to be implemented by CPD and other law enforcement agencies (CTA, Universities, etc.);

### **Oversight**

22) The Deputy Mayor of Immigrant Migrant and Refugee Rights should be responsible for overarching plans and reporting progress against plans to Chicagoans;

23) City Council members over applicable committees should be tasked with oversight responsibilities for applicable components of the plan (i.e. Finance and/or Budget committees should provide oversight for the finance-related components of the plan(s), etc.);

24) There should be scheduled city council meetings, open to the public, to review all aspects of the migrant crisis and progress against plans;

25) Importantly, the city council must discuss when we've hit numbers that are unsupportable, requiring the phase of the plan that literally turns back buses, to kick in; albeit humanely;

26) At these scheduled meetings, key stakeholders should provide reports on their respective area of responsibility (i.e. CPD should report on migrant generated crime and crimes against migrants, and what's being done to address this);

### **Legislation**

27) Ald. Lopez introduced an ordinance that essentially calls for migrants who have committed a crime to lose their sanctuary city protections, thus allowing them to be turned over to ICE. Passing this or similar legislation should be rolled into the plan;

28) A ballot initiative to ask Chicagoans if the city should continue as a sanctuary city, should be a serious discussion for the city council.

The above should not be mistaken for a well-thought-out detailed plan to handle the migrant crisis, however, it does provide key components and considerations that a plan to handle the migrant crisis should contain.

**A solid plan, disseminated and communicated by the Mayor, would go a long way towards Chicagoans having the confidence that the response to this crisis is being given the attention it deserves, that good minds have been assembled to develop solutions, and that progress towards handling this crisis is being made.**

It would demonstrate that the Mayor is listening to Chicagoans and their concerns, and that he is heading off more major problems that we all feel are percolating within plain view.

*Capable leaders do not allow crises to fester and grow; capable leaders develop solid plans, and in turn, execute said plans, monitoring and adjusting, as required, to ensure the best outcomes.*

**Mayor Johnson, please heed this simple and straightforward, albeit consequential, advice.**

***Another 22 migrant buses arrived overnight, yet you don't have a solid plan in place...***

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BTW - the mayor is not alone in this mess. Democratic leadership of the city, county and State owe residents solid, well communicated, executed and coordinated plans to handle the migrant crisis.

**COAL**