



WATER RESILIENCE IN GOOD TIMES & BAD

An event series exploring water resilience, now and post-COVID-19



WATER AFFORDABILITY IN NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

Trends, policies, and a path forward

MAY 12, 2020
TUESDAY @ 3:30 PM CST





WATER RESILIENCE IN GOOD TIMES & BAD



An event series exploring water resilience, now and post-COVID-19

ESSENTIAL INVESTMENT

Why water infrastructure should be part of stimulus and economic recovery

MAY 5, 2020
TUESDAY @ 3:30 PM CST

WATER AFFORDABILITY IN NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

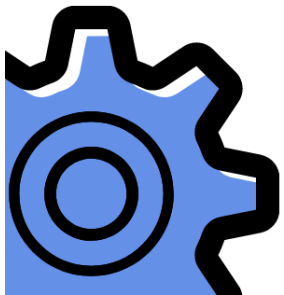
Trends, policies, and a path forward

MAY 12, 2020
TUESDAY @ 3:30 PM CST

CLEAN, SAFE, AND ABUNDANT

Solutions for stormwater and water quality

MAY 19, 2020
TUESDAY @ 3:30 PM CST



Water Affordability: Rates and Remedies

Josh Ellis, Metropolitan Planning Council, @MPCJosh, @metroplanners

Margaret Schneemann, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant

Caroline Pakenham, Elevate Energy, @CCarolineWater, @elevate_energy

Danielle Gallet, Metropolitan Planning Council

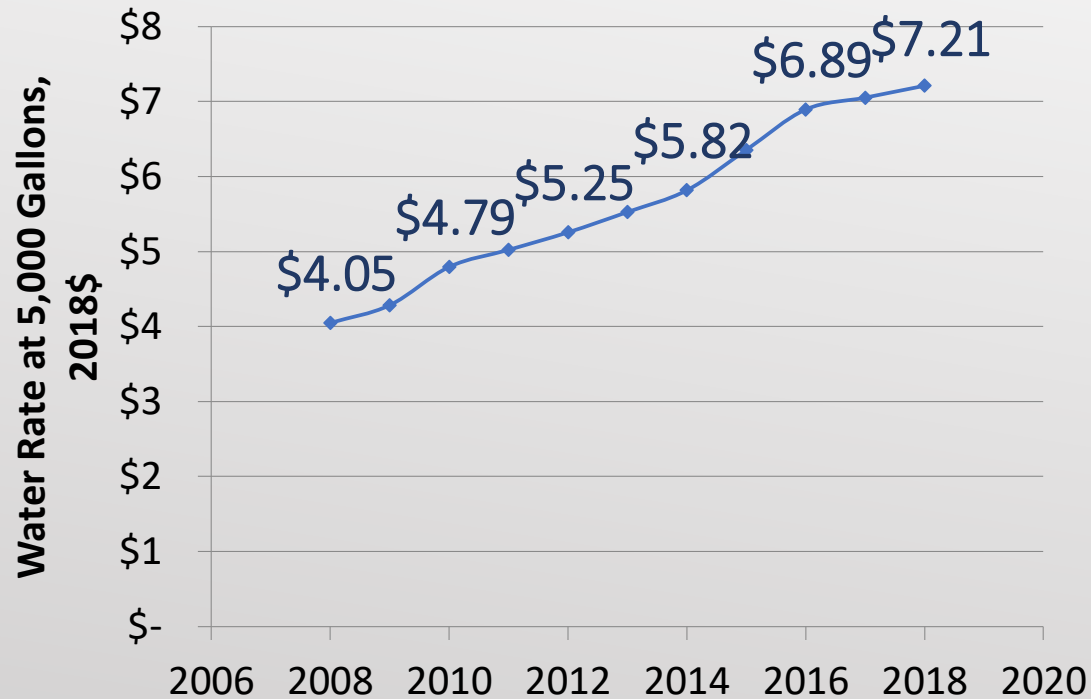
Dan Cooper, Metropolitan Planning Council

Margaret Garascia, Elevate Energy

Olivia Tse, Elevate Energy

Issue Background

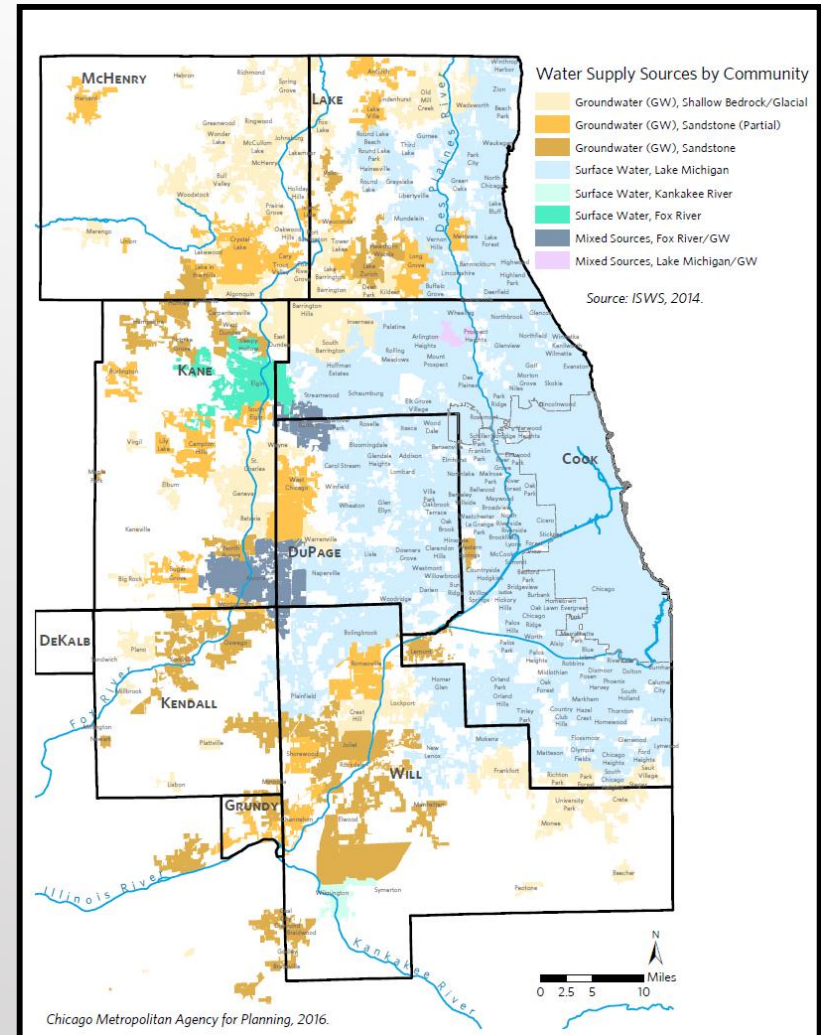
Northeastern Illinois Escalating Residential Water Rates 2000 – 2018



- Replacement era
- Supply constraints
- Source water pollution
- Need to price water appropriately

Study Geography

- 7 counties
- 284 communities
 - Data available for 215
- Community disparities



Research Objectives

1. Assess what today's best methodologies for determining water affordability are;
2. analyze and identify where in the northeastern Illinois region water affordability is a concern; and
3. jump start regional dialog on best practices in addressing affordability for those that need it most.

Method Summary

Water affordability measurements used in this analysis:

1. Percent median household income (MHI)
2. Percent of mean household income at the lowest earning quintile
3. Water affordability matrix
4. Number of...
5. Online data...

		Percent of households in area earning below 80% AMI		
		>=50%	25-49%	<25%
Percent household income for lowest quintile	Greater than 4.5%	High	High	Medium-High
	2.25-4.5%	Medium	Medium-High	Medium-Low
	Less than 2.25%	Low	Medium-High	Medium-Low

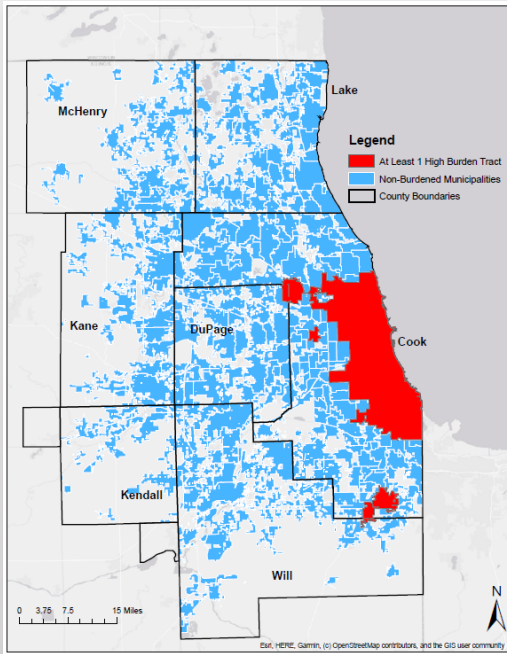
Considerations for Methods Selected

- Use of income quintiles
- Use of smaller geographic units (census tracts)
- Express water burden in more intuitive terms
- Comparison to other socio-economic factors

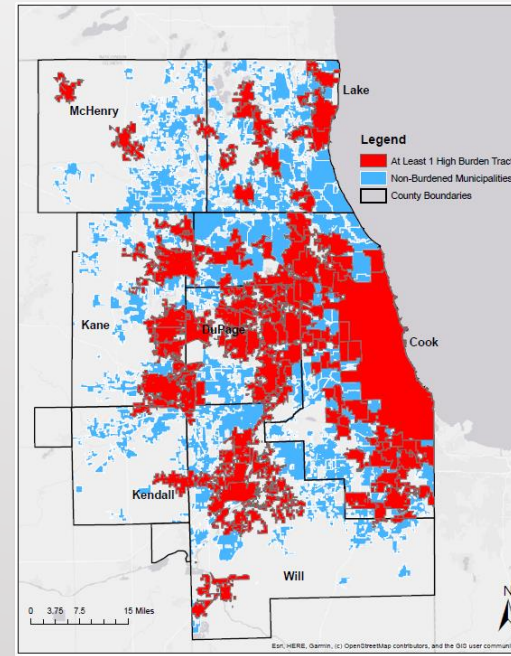
Data sources: ILSG Rate survey, U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2016 5-year estimates B19013, ACS 2016 5-year estimates B19081

Water Burden by Census Tract

Municipalities with at least one high burdened tract using 4.5% threshold of **Median Household Income**



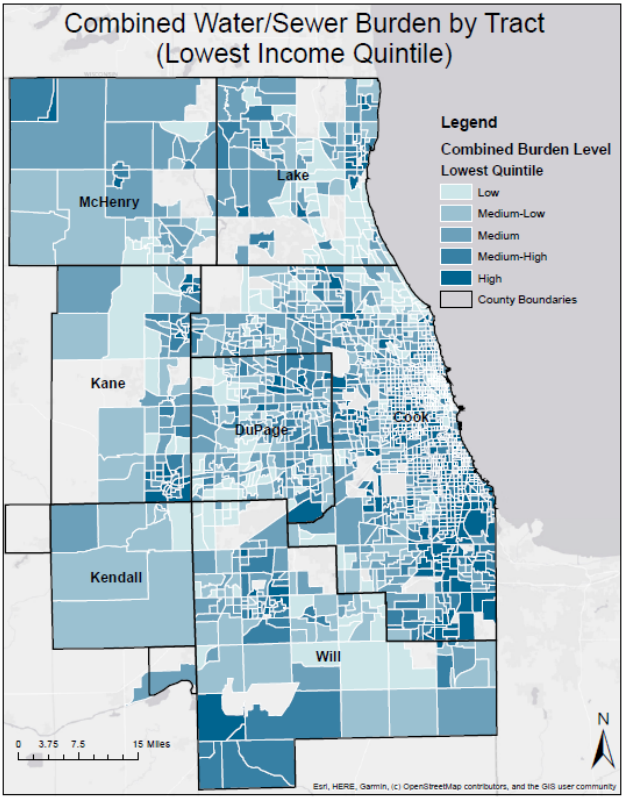
Municipalities with at least one high burdened tract for **lowest quintile earners**



Water Burden Comparison

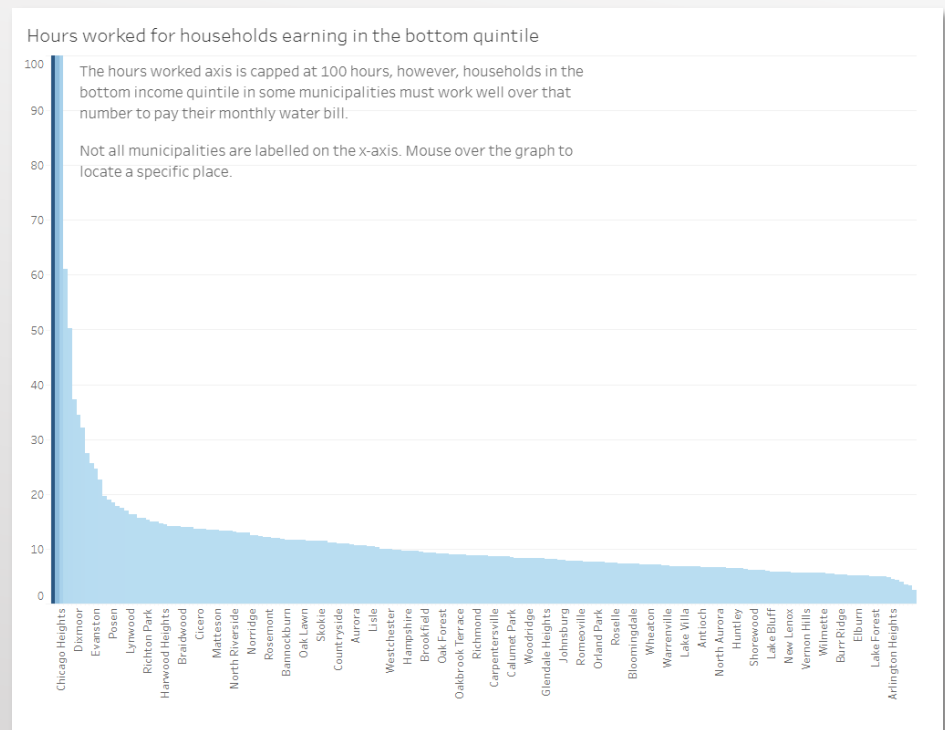
	Lowest Income Quintile Threshold	MHI Threshold
Mean Tract % Combined Expenditure	9.59%	1.06%
Median Tract % Combined Expenditure	3.60%	0.91%
Tract Burden Percent Range	0.58% - 100%	0.16% - 5.52%
Number of High Burdened Tracts <i>(Over 4.5%)</i>	682	4
Percent of Tracts That Are High Burdened	36.47%	< 1.00%
Municipalities with at Least One High Burdened Tract	109	4
Percent of Municipalities with at Least One High Burdened Tract	51.66%	1.90%

Water Matrix Burden Levels for Census Tracts

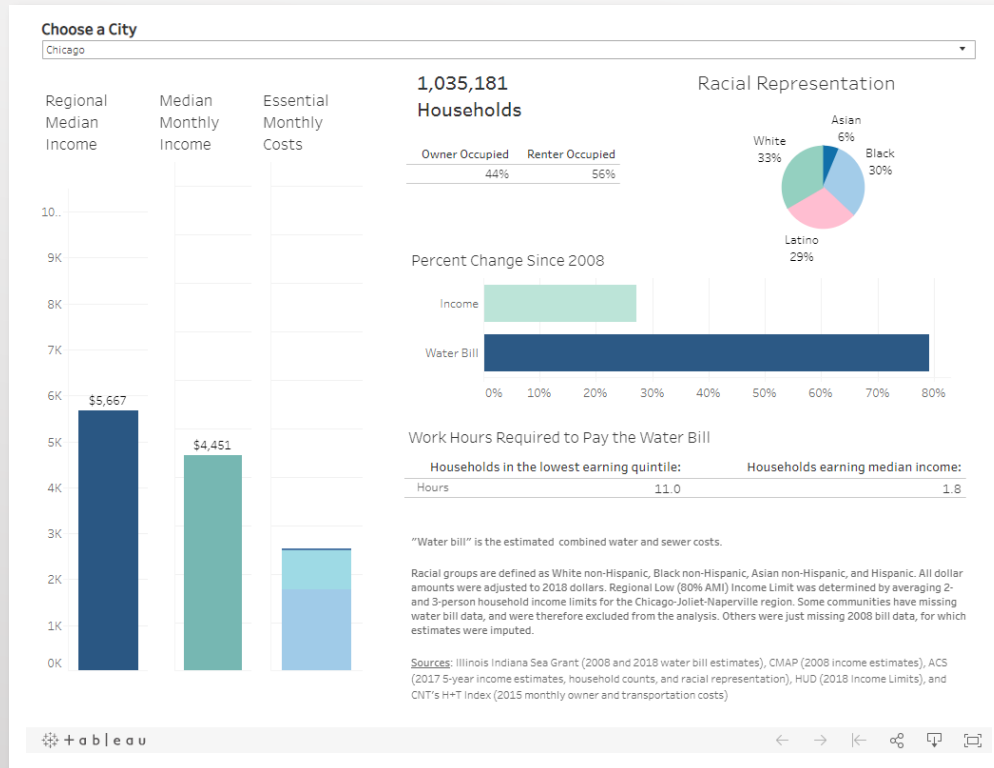


Hours Worked Analysis

- The lowest quintile income earners in **72 municipalities** have to work more than 8 hours to afford their combined water/sewer bill



Water Affordability Dashboard Tool



metroplanning.org/waterdashboard

Community Typologies and Corresponding Water Affordability Solutions

- Foundational actions for all communities
- Communities with high water costs/bill
- Communities facing an overarching low-income issue
- Communities with large hard-to-reach populations

Water Affordability Resources

metroplanning.org/WaterAffordability



Water Affordability in Northeastern Illinois

ADDRESSING WATER EQUITY IN A
TIME OF RISING COSTS

Metropolitan Planning Council

ELEVATE ENERGY
Smarter energy use for all.

Sea Grant
ILLINOIS-INDIANA

Water Shutoffs and Reconnections

What we know, don't know, and where to go from here



Water Access in the United States



- Millions lack access
- Water access predictors: race and economic status
- Water access backsliding in some parts of the country
- Lack of access = public health crisis

Source: 2019 Dig Deep and US Water Alliance Study

Water Shutoffs and Reconnections – COVID 19



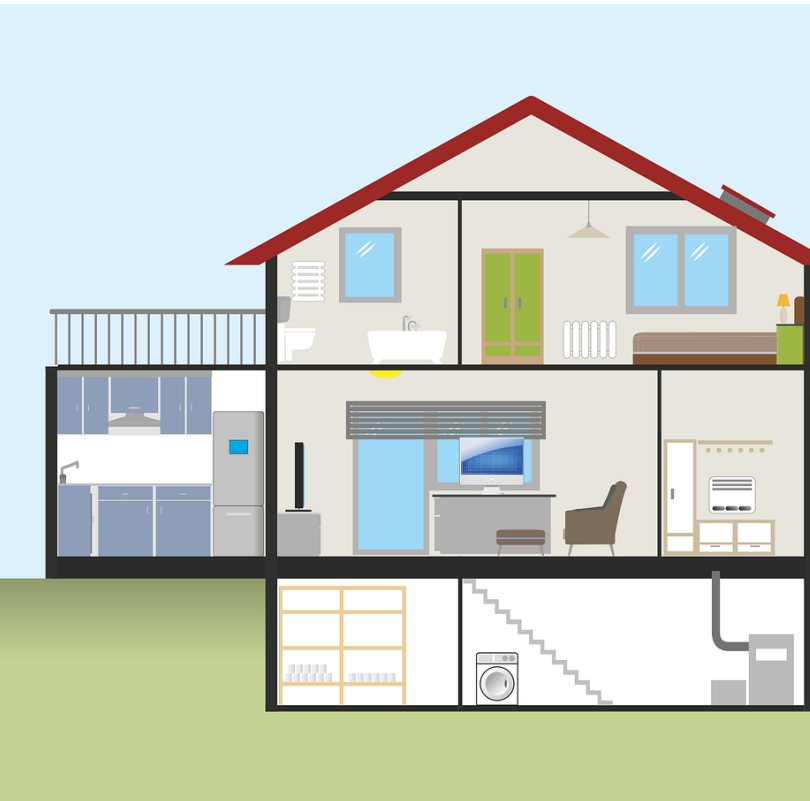
- More than a dozen states suspending water shutoffs
- ICC COVID-19 Order
- Chicago issued moratorium in 2019
- ILAWWA Survey:
 - All utilities plan to abide by ICC order
 - 56% plan to reconnect

Water Reconnections – Who needs access?



- Incomplete data on scope of problem
- Many non-metered customers
- Many undercounted
- Fear and hesitancy self identifying
- How can you manage what you don't know?

Water Reconnections – Health and Safety



- Are there leaks?
- Is the wastewater piping in tact?
- Are flushing protocols being followed?
- Concerns with heavy metals and organisms

Where do we go from here?



- What happens when moratoriums end?
- Need for immediate and long-term relief and affordability solutions
- Complete understanding of scope of problem
- Infrastructure upgrades

Contact information

Caroline Pakenham, Elevate Energy

Senior Manager, Water Programs

caroline.pakenham@elevateenergy.org



ElevateEnergy.org



info@ElevateEnergy.org



@ElevateEnergyNP



@Elevate_Energy



WATER AFFORDABILITY IN NE ILLINOIS

TRENDS, POLICIES, AND A PATH FORWARD

Jeremy Orr, Attorney

Natural Resources Defense Council

Safe Water Initiative

REGIONAL ACCESS & AFFORDABILITY



- ❖ COVID Disparities
- ❖ Michigan
- ❖ Ohio
- ❖ Indiana
- ❖ Post-COVID

NORTHEAST ILLINOIS



- ❖ Water Rates
- ❖ Disparities in safe drinking water enforcement
- ❖ Poor Infrastructure
- ❖ Water Loss & Water Waste (in-home)
- ❖ Legal/Policy Barriers

ILLINOIS OPPORTUNITIES

- ❖ State Study on Affordability
- ❖ Shutoff Moratoriums (ex. Chicago)
- ❖ Rate Restructuring and Income-based Rates
- ❖ Assistance Programs
- ❖ Establish Local Funds
- ❖ Broad Investments in Water Infrastructure to drive down the cost

Water
is **NOT**
just for the
WEALTHY



Jeremy Orr, Attorney
Natural Resources Defense Council
Safe Water Initiative

jorr@nrdc.org





WATER RESILIENCE IN GOOD TIMES & BAD

An event series exploring water resilience, now and post-COVID-19



WATER AFFORDABILITY IN NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS

Trends, policies, and a path forward

MAY 12, 2020
TUESDAY @ 3:30 PM CST





WATER RESILIENCE IN GOOD TIMES & BAD

An event series exploring water resilience, now and post-COVID-19

CLEAN, SAFE, AND ABUNDANT
Solutions for stormwater and water quality

MAY 19, 2020
TUESDAY @ 3:30 PM CST



EQUITY LEGAL SERVICES

