



CAMPAIGN BRIEF

Bio, Governing Priorities, Policy Positions, and Professional Experience

Thank you for your interest

Thank you for your interest in my campaign for Alderman of Chicago's 48th Ward. Whether you are a member of the press, a neighborhood organization, an endorsement committee, or simply someone interested in the future of our community, I appreciate you taking the time to learn more about my campaign.

I did not enter public life because I aspired to hold elected office. I entered because I believe our neighborhoods deserve leadership that can help prepare them for the opportunities and challenges ahead.

The 48th Ward is entering a period of extraordinary change. New transit investments, redevelopment opportunities, housing pressures, and changing economic conditions will shape our neighborhoods for decades. Those changes deserve more than project-by-project decisions—they require long-term vision, thoughtful coordination, and leadership capable of bringing people and institutions together around shared goals.

My professional background is in design, organizational change, and government improvement. From leading multidisciplinary teams at LEGO to my work with the Government Finance Officers Association, I have spent my career helping organizations solve complex problems, improve communication, align diverse stakeholders, and build systems that perform better over time.

That experience has shaped how I think about public office.

I believe an alderman should do more than respond to complaints or vote on ordinances. The office should help build the long-term capacity of a neighborhood—to attract investment, strengthen public institutions, coordinate partnerships, and create the conditions where residents can thrive.

This Campaign Brief introduces my background, my experience, and the priorities that will guide my campaign and, if elected, my administration. I hope it provides a clear understanding of both who I am and the kind of leadership I hope to bring to the 48th Ward.

Thank you for your interest and your consideration.

Justin Carmien

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Carmien". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Headshot



Bio (short)

Justin Carmien is a government designer, neighborhood leader, and candidate for Alderman of Chicago's 48th Ward. He serves as President of the Edgewater Beach Neighborhood Association and facilitates Chicago Police CAPS meetings. Professionally, Justin works with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), helping communicate ideas that strengthen local government and public finance. Earlier in his career, he served as a Design Manager at LEGO in Billund, Denmark. Justin is running to help the 48th Ward attract mission-driven investment, strengthen public safety, and build a more capable, transparent, and responsive city government.

Bio (long)

Justin Carmien is a government designer, neighborhood leader, and candidate for Alderman of Chicago's 48th Ward.

Since moving to Edgewater in 2021, Justin has become deeply involved in the civic life of the neighborhood. He serves as President of the Edgewater Beach Neighborhood Association, facilitates Chicago Police CAPS meetings, and works alongside neighborhood organizations, public institutions, and residents on issues ranging from public safety and development to environmental stewardship and community planning.

Justin's approach to public leadership has been shaped by a career spent designing organizations and improving how people work together. Before entering civic life, he served as a Design Manager at LEGO in Billund, Denmark, where he worked with multidisciplinary teams to develop products and experiences used around the world. His professional background in organizational change has focused on improving communication, aligning stakeholders, managing conflict, and helping complex organizations solve difficult problems.

Today, Justin works with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), a national organization dedicated to strengthening local government. Through that work, he helps communicate ideas about public finance, budgeting, and institutional improvement while gaining insight into how communities across the United States modernize government, strengthen public trust, and improve public services.

Justin believes that government itself is something that can be intentionally designed. His campaign is grounded in the idea that an alderman's responsibility extends beyond responding to individual requests or voting on ordinances. The office should help build the long-term capacity of neighborhoods by coordinating partners, attracting investment, strengthening public institutions, and creating the conditions where residents can thrive.

That philosophy informs his campaign for the 48th Ward and his commitment to thoughtful development, effective public service, and practical, long-term problem solving.

Governing Philosophy

Progressivism 2.0

For much of the past decade, progressivism has been defined by the causes it supports and the injustices it seeks to correct. Those commitments remain important. Governing, however, requires more than identifying problems—it requires building institutions capable of solving them.

Progressivism 2.0 begins with a simple proposition: the success of government should be measured not only by the values it expresses, but by its ability to deliver meaningful results.

Housing affordability requires more than changing zoning. Mobility requires more than moving traffic—it requires ensuring that everyone can get where they need to go safely, affordably, and reliably, whether by transit, walking, cycling, or driving. And public safety requires more than law enforcement and police accountability. Lasting progress depends on institutions capable of coordinating people, investment, infrastructure, and long-term planning.

At the center of this philosophy is a commitment to **dignity for everyone**.

“Dignity for Everyone”

Dignity is not an abstract ideal; it is experienced in everyday life. It is whether families can remain in their neighborhoods, whether seniors can age in place, whether businesses can invest with confidence, whether public spaces are welcoming and safe, and whether residents trust their government to deliver on its promises.

Compassion remains an essential civic virtue. But compassion alone cannot modernize infrastructure, strengthen public safety, expand housing opportunity, or attract investment. Those outcomes require capable institutions, professional leadership, and a government designed to translate public values into lasting results.

The five governing priorities that follow are intended to build that capacity.

Five Governing Priorities

#1 Development & Economic Growth

The 48th Ward is entering a period of extraordinary opportunity. Transit investments, redevelopment along Broadway, and changing economic conditions will shape our neighborhoods for decades. The challenge is ensuring growth strengthens the communities that already call the 48th Ward home.

As alderman, Justin will establish **Sustainable 48**—a proactive development strategy designed to attract mission-driven investment, assemble public resources, and aggressively pursue neighborhood development goals.

Priorities:

- Develop a ward-level vision connecting development, infrastructure, public spaces, sustainability, and neighborhood identity.
- Partner with architects, planners, institutions, businesses, and residents to create the vision and planning assets needed to attract investment.
- Advance transit-oriented development around Berwyn, Bryn Mawr, and Thorndale stations while supporting pedestrian activity, locally rooted businesses, and community-serving spaces.
- Pursue green infrastructure, lakefront resilience, and other investments that strengthen neighborhood sustainability and manage stormwater.

#2 Public Safety & Police Transformation

A safe neighborhood requires more than emergency response. It requires strong relationships, professional policing, and partnerships capable of addressing challenges before they become crises.

Drawing from his experience facilitating Chicago Police CAPS meetings, Justin supports a modern approach to community policing that strengthens both public safety and trust between residents and officers.

Priorities:

- Revitalize CAPS through stronger community presence, beat engagement, and collaboration with neighborhood organizations.
- Support recruitment, training, and professional development focused on communication, de-escalation, crisis response, and relationship-building.
- Measure public safety success through outcomes such as reduced repeat calls for service, stronger community trust, and improved neighborhood participation.
- Expand partnerships with mental health professionals, youth programs, and community-based services.

Five Governing Priorities (cont.)

#3 Housing Stability & Neighborhood Affordability

Housing policy should expand opportunity while helping residents build long-term stability in the neighborhoods they call home. The 48th Ward needs both new investment and strategies to preserve the homes and buildings that define our communities.

Justin supports a housing approach that balances growth with stability by expanding supply, reducing displacement pressures, and investing in Chicago's existing housing stock.

Priorities:

- Support mixed-income, transit-oriented development that increases housing opportunity while strengthening neighborhood vitality.
- Explore targeted property tax and rent stabilization for existing housing, and other tools that reduce displacement while encouraging new housing production.
- Expand programs that help property owners modernize aging housing stock through energy efficiency, accessibility, sustainability, and long-term maintenance.
- Explore Urban Wealth Fund approaches that leverage public assets to reinvest in housing affordability, neighborhood infrastructure, and community resilience.

#4 Neighborhood Partnership Network

The 48th Ward has extraordinary civic energy. The challenge is creating stronger connections between residents, community organizations, and the resources of government.

As alderman, Justin will establish a **Neighborhood Partnership Network** to improve communication, coordination, and collaboration across the ward.

Priorities:

- Create clearer communication channels between residents, City Hall, and the 48th Ward office.
- Connect block clubs, neighborhood associations, schools, cultural institutions, and community partners around shared priorities.
- Support community-led projects by helping residents and organizations access resources, partnerships, and city support.

Five Governing Priorities (cont.)

#5 Good Governance & Chicago City Charter

Good governance is not an abstract idea. It determines whether residents receive reliable services, whether projects move forward, and whether people trust their institutions.

Justin believes Chicago's next generation of leadership must focus on strengthening the capacity, transparency, and accountability of government.

Priorities:

- Improve coordination across city departments so government can better align resources and deliver results.
- Increase transparency by providing residents with clearer information about decisions, processes, and outcomes.
- Support a thoughtful exploration of a **Chicago City Charter** to modernize government structure and strengthen public trust.
- Explore tools such as **Citizens' Juries** to help residents better understand complex issues, referendums, and participate meaningfully in public decisions.

Policy Positions

Affordability

Supports targeted property tax and rent stabilization for existing housing. Innovative financing tools, including Urban Wealth Fund approaches, should be explored for offsetting maintenance, accessibility, and energy modernization of existing housing.

Broadway Land Use

Supports moving beyond a zoning-first approach by pairing land use with proactive planning, developer outreach, infrastructure coordination, and neighborhood vision.

Chicago Police Department and Mental Health Crises

Supports investing in community policing, mental health treatment, and CPD performance measures that emphasize neighborhood outcomes and public trust, rather than merely law enforcement.

Emanuel Temple Site

Supports evaluating the Emanuel Temple site as part of a broader lakefront strategy. Whether through public acquisition or redevelopment, the outcome should strengthen the pedestrian activity and preserve long-term public access to the lakefront.

Environmental Impact (Sustainability)

Supports revising Chicago's Sustainable Building Policy (SBP).

Green Infrastructure

Supports implementing Chicago's Green Infrastructure Strategy and prioritizing nature-based stormwater investments through Menu funding.

Policy Positions (cont.)

Lakefront Protection

Supports treating the lakefront as critical public infrastructure by expanding public access, strengthening shoreline resilience, and advancing nature-based solutions that protect neighborhoods from long-term erosion and storm impacts.

Mobility

Supports expanding transit, walking, and cycling while recognizing that many households—including families, seniors, tradespeople, and people with disabilities—continue to rely on automobiles. Transportation planning should improve mobility for everyone rather than shifting burdens from one group to another.

Parking & Curb Management

Supports changes to parking or curb space guided by data, neighborhood conditions, and clear public benefits—not assumptions about how residents ought to travel. Creating difficult conditions for car-dependent lifestyles is not a feasible neighborhood strategy.

Public Transit

Supports Bus Rapid Transit on DuSable Lake Shore Drive.

Walking & Cycling

Supports expanding safe walking and cycling infrastructure as part of a balanced transportation system that provides residents with practical alternatives to driving.

Experience and Leadership

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)

Communications Designer, 2022 - present

Edgewater Beach Neighborhood Association (EBNA)

President, 2024 - present

Edgewater Coalition of Block Clubs

Member, 2024 - present

Edgewater Environmental Coalition (EEC)

Member, 2023 - present

Edgewater Parks Improvement Coalition (EPIC)

Member, 2023 - present

Edgewater Historical Society (EHS)

Member, 2026 - present

Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy (CAPS)

Beat 2023/2024 Meeting Facilitator, 2025

Bryn Mawr Alliance, taskforce of the 48th Ward office (BMA)

Community Outreach Committee Leader, 2025

Brand Assets

Contact



Campaign Website

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Campaign Substack

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Campaign Donation Link (Anedot)

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