

DATA CENTERS · ISSUE #10

GET THE LEAD OUT

Adult / Community Edition · Prestige

CREDITS

Get the Lead Out · Data Centers #10 · Adult / Community edition

Story and production: GOTB Consulting, Chicago

*Lead: Mateo Olmedo · Heroes: Commons, Undertow, The Auditor · On screen: Lena
Ashgrove, Channel 5 · Cameo: Dess*

AI-GENERATED ART, FICTIONAL CHARACTERS

All characters, the town of Prairie Bend and Channel 5 are fictional. Any resemblance to real people is a coincidence. No real logos are shown. Real places, agencies and utilities are named only where public sources are cited; officials appear by role.

Every number was checked against public sources (see Sources). Disputed points carry a CONTESTED stamp and the strongest case on each side.

Nonpartisan: no parties, no politicians.

Never sand, scrape or chew old paint. Wash hands before eating. Only trained, licensed crews should touch service lines.

Lettering: Bebas Neue, Oswald, Kalam, Libre Baskerville, Courier Prime, Special Elite (set in Pillow; no fonts embedded).

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THE CAST



MATEO OLMEDO

Two chairs, one level.
Gives each side its
strongest voice.



UNDERTOW

Reads the flow. Knows
every main by heart.



THE AUDITOR

Sees it, reports it.
Cannot fix it alone.



COMMONS

Crews and neighbors.
Lantern up.



MATEO

A SHORT PIPE BETWEEN THE WATER
MAIN AND THE KITCHEN.



MATEO

THE MOST ARGUED-OVER FEW FEET IN
THE CITY.

FACT FILE · 01



Chicago's water service lines, which connect water mains to homes, were primarily made of lead until 1986, when the federal government banned lead.

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

GOTB / DC FILE

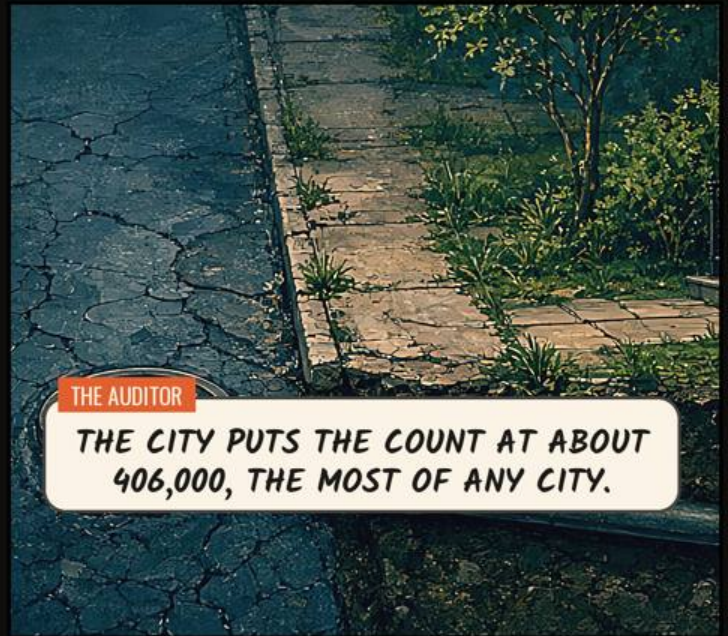
THE AUDITOR

CHICAGO'S SERVICE LINES WERE
PRIMARILY LEAD UNTIL THE FEDERAL
BAN IN 1986.



THE AUDITOR

THE CITY PUTS THE COUNT AT ABOUT
406,000, THE MOST OF ANY CITY.



FACT FILE · 02

REPORTED

Chicago's water service lines, which connect water mains to homes, were primarily made of lead until 1986, when the federal government banned lead. Chicago is "the city with the most lead service lines at 406,000" (DWM leadership page, written for 2024).

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site); Chicago Dept. of Water Management, "Leadership" page

GOTB / DC FILE



FACT FILE · 03

When lead is found in drinking water, it can be because it dissolved from lead in pipes and plumbing. Young children under 6 are most at risk of lead poisoning, which can affect growth, behavior and development.

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

GOTB / DC FILE

HEARING ROOM



FACT FILE · 04

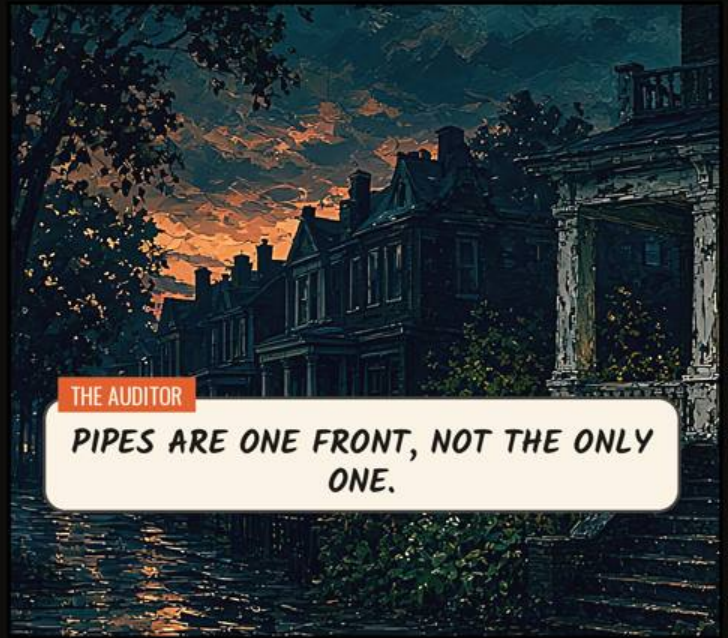
Framing panel: the two chairs present the strongest case on each side. Figures appear on the panels that follow, each with its source.

Source: GOTB framing (no statistic)

GOTB / DC FILE

THE AUDITOR

THE CITY'S OWN PROGRAM SAYS LEAD PAINT AND DUST ARE BY FAR THE LEADING CAUSE OF LEAD POISONING IN CHICAGO.



THE AUDITOR

PIPES ARE ONE FRONT, NOT THE ONLY ONE.

FACT FILE · 05

Lead paint and its dust are by far the leading cause of lead poisoning in Chicago; homes built before 1978 (when lead paint was banned) should be assumed to have lead paint unless tested.

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

GOTB / DC FILE

THE CHART

LENA · ON SCREEN

TESTED CHILDREN WITH LEAD
POISONING: 25% IN THE LATE 1990S,
ABOUT 2% TODAY, AFTER
INSPECTIONS, ABATEMENT AND
TESTING.



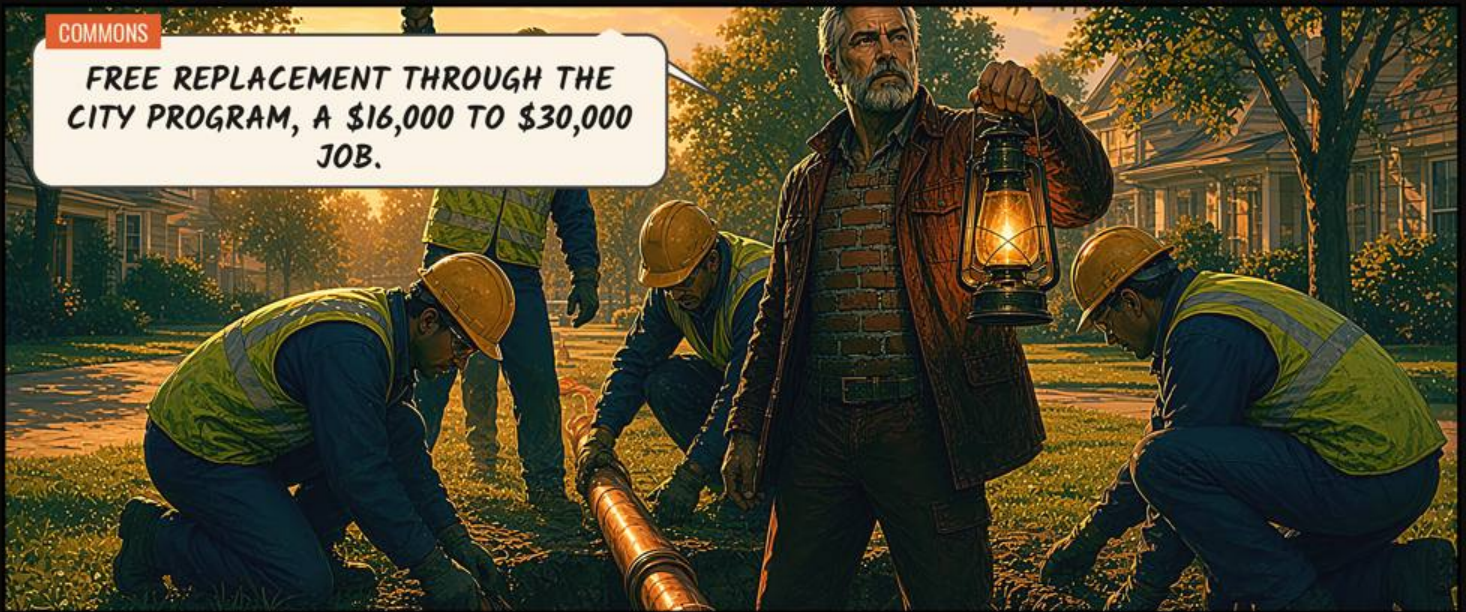
FACT FILE · 06

VERIFIED

Through inspections, paint removal (abatement) and testing, the share of tested children with lead poisoning fell from 25% in the late 1990s to about 2% today.

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

GOTB / DC FILE



FACT FILE · 07

The city offers free lead service line replacement, "a \$16,000-\$30,000 value," and a Service Line Inventory where residents can check whether their line is lead.

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

GOTB / DC FILE

THE SCHEDULE

LENA · ON SCREEN

THE 2025 PLAN: ABOUT 8,300 REPLACEMENTS A YEAR FROM 2027, 41,500 BY 2031, DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES FIRST, TO MEET THE STATE'S MANDATORY SCHEDULE.



FACT FILE · 08



Under the 2025 Lead Service Line Replacement Plan, the target starting in 2027 is about 8,300 replacements a year, 41,500 cumulative by the end of 2031, prioritizing disadvantaged communities, to meet a mandatory state schedule.

Source: Chicago DWM, "Notice of Public Hearing," lead service line loan project (hearing held March 6, 2026)

GOTB / DC FILE

MATEO

406,000 DIVIDED BY 8,300 IS ABOUT
49 YEARS.



MATEO

THE PACE IS THE POLICY QUESTION.



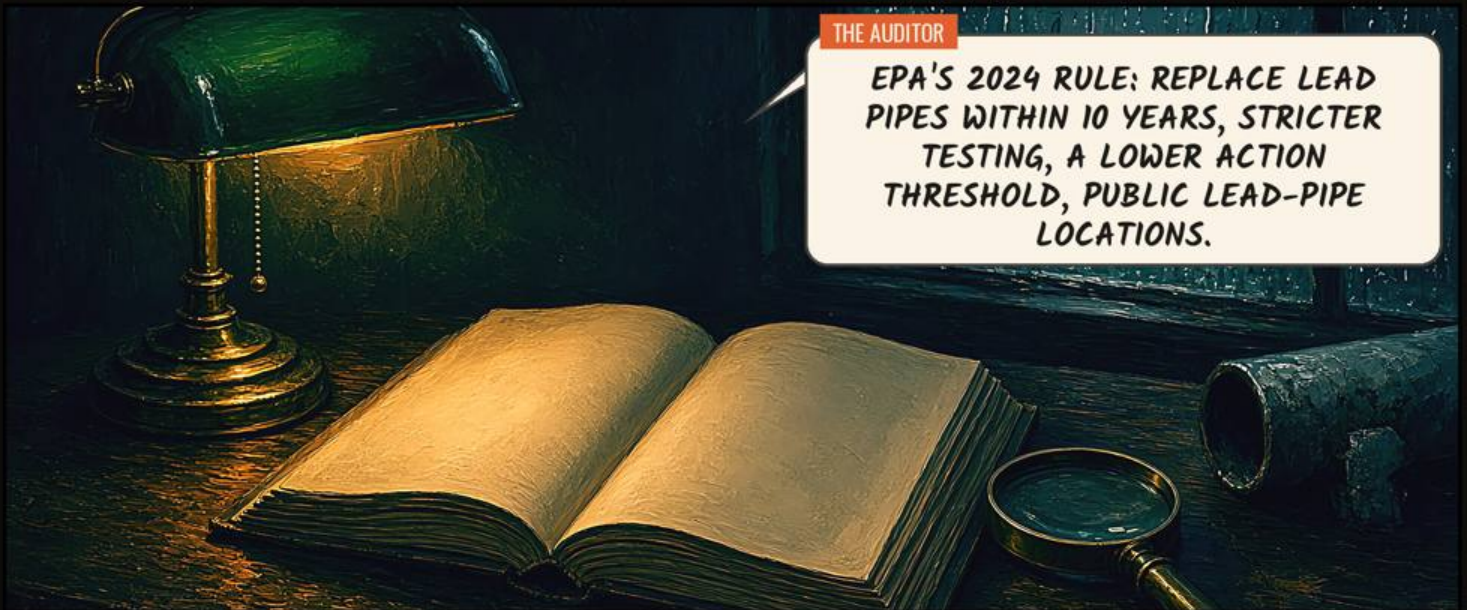
FACT FILE · 09



Chicago is "the city with the most lead service lines at 406,000" (DWM leadership page, written for 2024). Under the 2025 Lead Service Line Replacement Plan, the target starting in 2027 is about 8,300 replacements a year, 41,500 cumulative by the end of 2031, prioritizing disadvantaged communities, to meet a mandatory state schedule.

Source: Chicago Dept. of Water Management, "Leadership" page; Chicago DWM, "Notice of Public Hearing," lead service line loan project (hearing held March 6, 2026)

GOTB / DC FILE

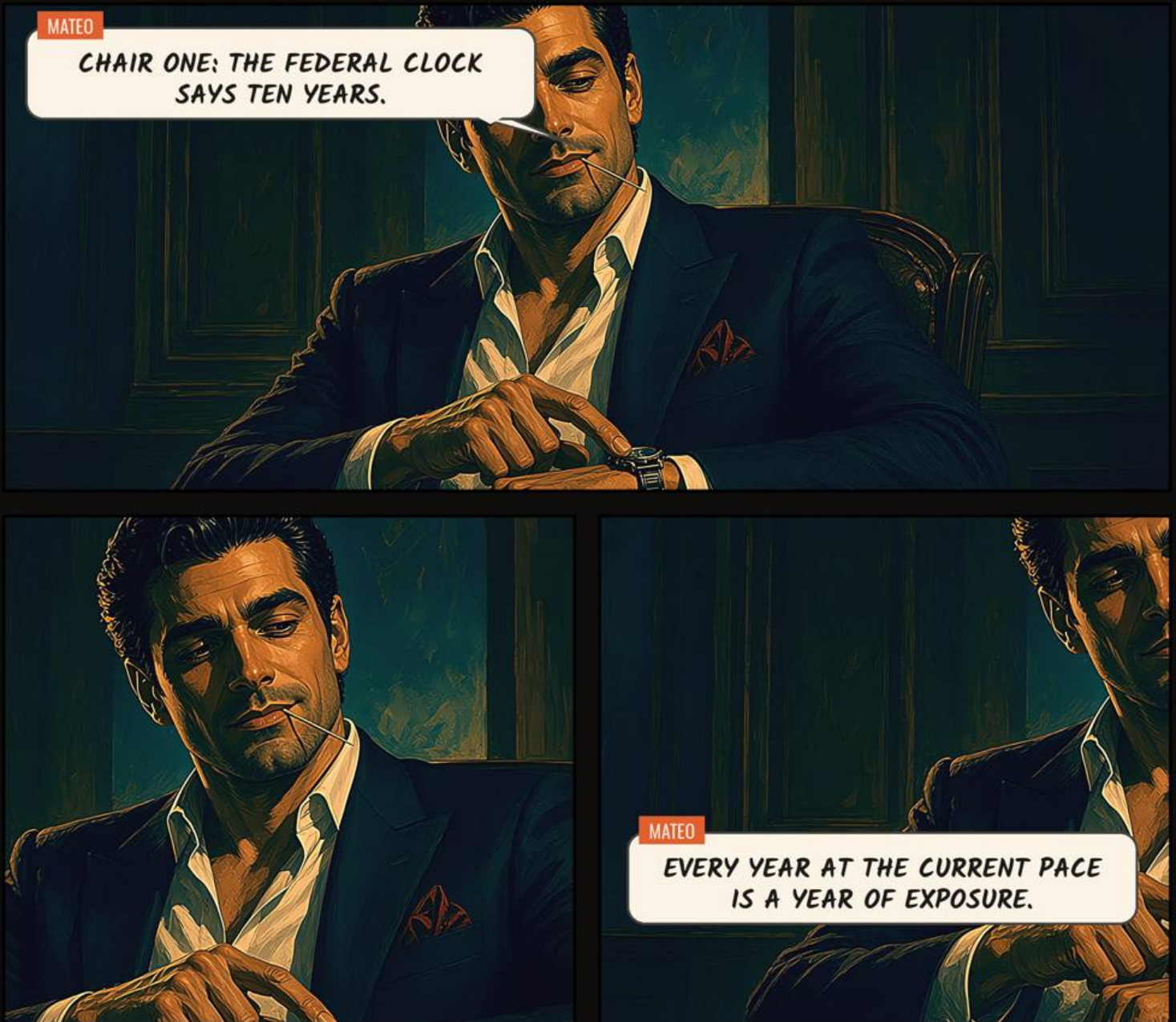


FACT FILE · 10

EPA's final Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (issued Oct 8, 2024) require water systems to identify and replace lead pipes within 10 years, require more rigorous testing, set a lower threshold for action, and require better communication about lead pipe locations and replacement plans. EPA estimates the rule's health and economic benefits at up to 13 times its costs; EPA lists \$2.6 billion in Drinking Water State Revolving Fund lead funding.

Source: U.S. EPA, "Lead and Copper Rule Improvements" (page last updated Dec 29, 2025)

GOTB / DC FILE



MATEO

CHAIR ONE: THE FEDERAL CLOCK
SAYS TEN YEARS.

MATEO

EVERY YEAR AT THE CURRENT PACE
IS A YEAR OF EXPOSURE.

FACT FILE · 11

EPA's final Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (issued Oct 8, 2024) require water systems to identify and replace lead pipes within 10 years, require more rigorous testing, set a lower threshold for action, and require better communication about lead pipe locations and replacement plans.

Source: U.S. EPA, "Lead and Copper Rule Improvements" (page last updated Dec 29, 2025)

GOTB / DC FILE

CHAIR TWO



MATEO

CHAIR TWO: SPEED TAKES CREWS,
PERMITS AND MONEY THAT DON'T
EXIST YET.



MATEO

A PLAN YOU CAN'T STAFF IS A PRESS
RELEASE.

FACT FILE · 12

Framing panel: the two chairs present the strongest case on each side. Figures appear on the panels that follow, each with its source.

Source: GOTB framing (no statistic)

GOTB / DC FILE

LENA · ON SCREEN

EPA LISTS \$2.6 BILLION IN DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND MONEY FOR LEAD.



LENA · ON SCREEN

CITIES APPLY; CHICAGO HELD ITS HEARING IN MARCH 2026.



FACT FILE · 13

EPA estimates the rule's health and economic benefits at up to 13 times its costs; EPA lists \$2.6 billion in Drinking Water State Revolving Fund lead funding. Under the 2025 Lead Service Line Replacement Plan, the target starting in 2027 is about 8,300 replacements a year, 41,500 cumulative by the end of 2031, prioritizing disadvantaged communities, to meet a mandatory state schedule.

Source: U.S. EPA, "Lead and Copper Rule Improvements" (page last updated Dec 29, 2025); Chicago DWM, "Notice of Public Hearing," lead service line loan project (hearing held March 6, 2026)

GOTB / DC FILE



FACT FILE · 14



When lead is found in drinking water, it can be because it dissolved from lead in pipes and plumbing.

Source: Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

GOTB / DC FILE



FACT FILE · 15



Framing panel: no new statistic on this page. Figures appear on the panels around it, each with its source.

Source: GOTB framing (no statistic)

GOTB / DC FILE

THE FINISHED PARKWAY



MATEO

TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL.



MATEO

PUBLISH THE SCHEDULE, THEN ARGUE
ABOUT THE PACE IN THE OPEN.

GOTB Consulting, Chicago: infrastructure and procurement for the power, water and public works these projects depend on.

BY THE NUMBERS

1986

Year federal law banned lead pipes; Chicago service lines were mostly lead until then. (City of Chicago)

406,000

Lead service lines in Chicago, the most of any U.S. city. (City, Reported)

25% TO ~2%

Share of tested kids with lead poisoning, late 1990s vs. today. (City of Chicago)

\$16K-\$30K

Value of the free city service line replacement. (City of Chicago)

8,300 / YEAR

Replacement target from 2027; 41,500 by end of 2031. (2025 city plan)

10 YEARS

EPA 2024 rule deadline to replace lead pipes. Benefits up to 13x costs. (EPA)

TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL

The strongest case on each side, labeled. Nonpartisan.

GO FAST

Replace lines quickly, block by block, starting where risk is highest.

GO CAREFUL

Huge cost and crew limits; plan the order and pay for it fairly.

DON'T FORGET PAINT

Old paint dust is the leading cause of lead poisoning in Chicago.

WHAT BOTH SHARE

Safe water, healthy kids, a plan made in the open.

YOUR TURN

How would you decide which block goes first? _____

SOURCES

Full list with fact IDs: FACT_BASE.md and NUMBER_CHECK.md (GOTB internal).

LEAD SAFE CHICAGO (CITY OF CHICAGO PROGR

Lead Safe Chicago (City of Chicago program site)

CHICAGO DEPT. OF WATER MANAGEMENT

Chicago Dept. of Water Management, "Leadership" page

CHICAGO DWM

Chicago DWM, "Notice of Public Hearing," lead service line loan project (hearing held March 6, 2026)

U.S. EPA

U.S. EPA, "Lead and Copper Rule Improvements" (page last updated Dec 29, 2025)

ABOUT GOTB CONSULTING

WHO WE ARE

A Chicago firm working on infrastructure and procurement for the systems communities depend on.

DATA CENTERS

Siting, delivery and community questions.

POWER

Grid connections, substations and lines.

WATER

Supply, treatment and cooling.

PUBLIC WORKS

Roads, pipes and public spaces.

THE END



TWO CHAIRS, ONE LEVEL.

Get the lead out, and decide the order in the open.

GOTB CONSULTING · CHICAGO

Data centers · Power · Water · Public works

AI-generated art, fictional characters