

Elevated Chicago at the Logan Square Blue Line: A Workplan for Equitable Transit-Oriented Development

January 2019

Opportunities & Challenges

“What has made this neighborhood so wonderful for a long time,” says Christian Diaz of Logan Square Neighborhood Association, “Is its diversity and immigrant flavor.” Amongst the neighborhood’s many strengths, its longtime residents and businesses are some of its most valuable. Many of them are working hard to preserve what has made the community unique. “We elevate the voices in our community,” says Diaz, “And make sure they are at the table when we make decisions.”

Unfortunately, those same residents’ ability to remain in the place they’ve called home is under threat. The area surrounding the Logan Square Blue Line stop is one of the city’s fastest-growing real estate markets. Between 2000 and 2015, more than 20,000 Latinos left the Logan Square community, many of them due to rising rents and property taxes. These trends have been expedited by developments like the 606 “rails to trails” project, and luxury housing around transit stops that is not affordable for current residents or suitable for larger families.

Displacement of people of color is not just occurring in Logan Square, but across the Chicago region.

Displacement can be triggered by gentrification — when rents and property taxes grow too high or too fast, making homes and retail spaces unaffordable to community residents and small businesses — but also by long-term disinvestment. In particular, many African American residents have left neighborhoods on the south and west sides that were once thriving communities but that public and private investors ignored, exploited, or disinvested for decades. Gentrification and disinvestment, and the ensuing displacement, are neither accidental nor natural, but the result of centuries of intentional, racially motivated planning and development practices. Residents still endure this legacy, as well as exclusion from decisions that affect the future of their neighborhood.

Thankfully, Logan Square’s strong community leaders and organizations — which include the housing advocates, community organizers, and resource providers at Logan Square Neighborhood Association, LUCHA, and Center for Changing Lives, amongst others — are leading the charge to preserve affordability, prevent further displacement, and celebrate the arts and culture of the area’s established Latina/o residents.



Hundreds of Logan Square residents participated in the March for Equity organized by Logan Square eHub partners on October 23, 2018.

Elevated Chicago

Elevated Chicago is an innovative collaboration of community leaders and organizations, regional nonprofits and planning agencies, funders, public officials, and others, who have come together to create a more racially equitable city and region. Its goals include preventing further resident and business displacement by helping to develop more prosperous, healthy and resilient communities. The initiative also aims to transform the power dynamics that determine how neighborhoods are built in Chicago. To accomplish this, we are using an approach called Equitable Transit Oriented Development, or eTOD. The City of Chicago's Transit Oriented Development ordinance and policy make areas surrounding transit stops especially attractive for development: eTOD helps ensure that these new assets and wealth will be enjoyed equitably by the area's existing and longtime residents.

In Logan Square, residents have already seen how inaccessible new amenities can be to longtime community members, as with luxury housing developments like MiCA, L, MODE, and Logan's Crossing. eTOD helps ensure that the development taking place around transit will be enjoyed and owned by existing and longtime residents.

Elevated Chicago has started its work around seven CTA stations, including Logan Square on the Blue Line. Elevated Chicago partners invest resources in programs and projects within the ½ mile radius circle around each station to advance racial equity in health, climate and cultural indicators. These transit-rich circles are called equitable hubs, or eHubs.

The Workplan of Elevated Chicago for the Logan Square eHub is advanced by a Community Table led by Logan Square Neighborhood Association and LUCHA, in partnership with the Center for Changing Lives, and others. Logan Square Blue Line is one of four Community Table sites representing other community-based organizations and stakeholders.

Other Community Tables include Green Line South, Pink Line California, and the Kedzie Corridor. All of them share with Logan Square visionary resident leaders, concerns regarding the threat of displacement, catalytic projects, and programs led by community stakeholders, and the desire to see the region and its decision makers better appreciate the neighborhood's residents, assets, and culture.

LUCHA's Tierra Linda is an affordable development located near the 606 that includes Illinois' first multi-family Passive Homes, developed to nurture sustainable and healthy living.



Making Our Workplan Happen in the Logan Square Blue Line eHub

Our Workplan for the Logan Square Blue Line eHub includes a set of strategies to prevent further displacement and preserve the area's long-established culture. These strategies rely upon one of the neighborhood's greatest strengths: Its people. They include working with residents, and across Elevated Chicago's sites, to advocate for policy changes that will preserve affordability within and beyond Logan Square. Youth participation is an important part of this work, drawing upon Logan Square Neighborhood Association's existing youth program, which engages young people in urban planning and community-driven zoning. Says Christian Diaz, "When teens meet with developers and elected officials, it's truly inspiring to see them in action."

Additional strategies include building stronger relationships between longstanding and newer residents, through a campaign to transform "hearts and minds" in support of affordable housing and opposing further displacement. Neighborhood leaders are also pursuing an innovative cooperative model to ensure local ownership of homes. And a set of arts and cultural programs are celebrating and preserving the area's established culture, including the Faces of Logan Square street festival that featured stories of longtime Latina/o residents. The Community Table has explored establishing the area as an EcoDistrict, which would unify these strategies under a vision for a green, healthy, inclusive environment for all residents.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association partnered with Chicago United for Equity (CUE) to train residents on how to apply a Racial Equity Impact Assessment to the Chicago Dept. of Transportation efforts to redesign the Logan square traffic circle.



Logan Square Blue Line eHub Asset Map



Community, Arts + Culture

1. Logan Square Neighborhood Association
2. Hairpin Art Center
3. Elastic Arts
4. Comfort Station
5. Logan Square Public Library
6. Logan Square Theater
7. Inner City Impact
- Community, Arts + Culture Organization/Project

Health-related

1. Advocate Health Center
2. Pro-Health Medical Center
3. Angel Harvey Family Health Center
4. Logan Square Health Center
5. Fullerton-Kedzie Medical Center
6. Five Point Holistic Health
- ◆ Grocery Store

Green Space + Climate Resilient Infrastructure

1. Logan Square Park
2. Kedzie Boulevard
3. Logan Boulevard
- ◆ Community Garden

Education

1. Avondale-Logandale Elementary
2. Logandale Middle School
3. ASPIRA Business & Finance HS
4. Christopher House Preschool
5. Charles R. Darwin Public School
6. Stepping Stones Nursery School
7. St. Sylvesters School

Economic Development + Workforce

1. Logan Square Chamber of Commerce

Affordable + Social Housing

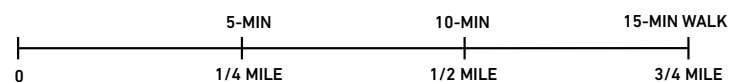
1. Woodbridge Nursing Pavilion

Elevated Chicago – Projects in Capital Pipeline

- A. Community Land Trust (Diversey/North/California/Kostner)
- B. Emmett Street Affordable Housing
- C. Logan Square Bioswale

Other Catalytic Projects / Investment

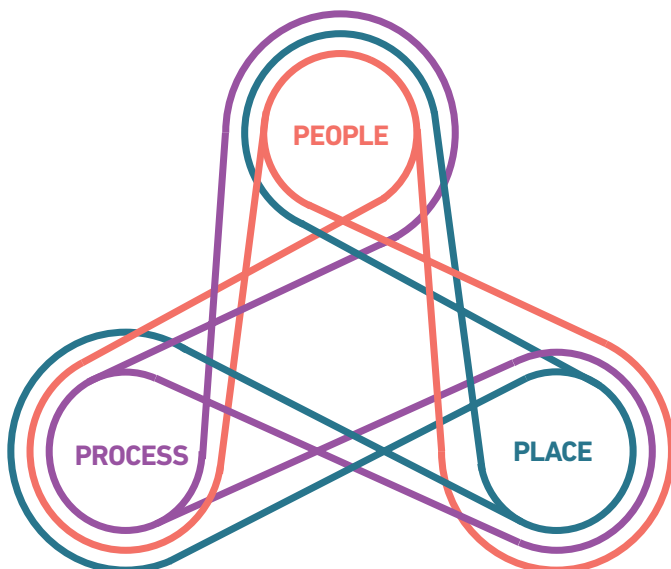
- A. Tierra Linda Passive House Development
- B. Community Garden – Drake Avenue
- C. Mega Mall Redevelopment
- D. Logan Square Bicentennial Improvements
- E. CTA owned-lot (2525 N Kedzie Blvd)
- F. Former Grace's Furniture building (hotel planned)



Priorities

Across Elevated Chicago's eHubs, residents have already participated in multiple planning efforts for which there was little implementation. Elevated Chicago has identified priorities that build on those prior efforts and conversations. When selecting those priorities, we avoided making promises upon which we cannot deliver, and focused on projects that are feasible with resources that are currently available, or can be realistically supported by reaching out to Elevated Chicago's broader network.

These priorities represent projects taking place within the ½ mile radius around the Logan Square Blue Line station, as well as cross-site initiatives that aim to transform how decisions about neighborhood development are made in Chicago. They are organized into three themes: Those that engage and develop the community's **people**, projects that improve the neighborhood as a **place**, and goals for changing the **process** for how decisions get made. This list should not be interpreted as comprehensive and final, but as an invitation for further resident participation and ownership.



People — Programs that Engage Residents & Build Community Leadership & Ownership

- **Activation of Spaulding Plaza**
LUCHA and Logan Square Neighborhood Association are working with other partners, including Dill Pickle Food Coop, to transform Spaulding Plaza into a destination for residents to sell food, celebrate culture, and gather for community events, anchored by a new mural and the Faces of Logan Square festival, which celebrates the stories and culture of longtime residents.
- **Air Quality & Asthma Research & Education Initiative**
Led by LUCHA in collaboration with the University of Illinois, Prentice Health, and St. Elizabeth and Mary's Hospital, results of an air quality study will be shared with residents, and will include home remediation equipment and strategies to alleviate and prevent asthma.
- **Center for Neighborhood Technology Equity Express**
Integrated with ongoing financial coaching programs implemented by Center for Changing Lives, this program provides residents with concrete money-saving tips and a general understanding of financial planning, energy, transportation, food, telecommunications, recycling, and other critical topics.
- **Employment & Financial Coaching, Foreclosure Mitigation, Homebuyer Education & Aging in Place**
Programs coordinated by LUCHA and the Center for Changing Lives include job placement and retention; financial coaching for two-generational families; individual coaching, education, and information to prevent foreclosures; pre- and post-purchase coaching, education, and information for homebuyers; and provision of services and renovations to enable low income seniors to remain in their homes.

- **Hearts & Minds Anti-Displacement Campaign**

This campaign demonstrates that affordable housing is necessary and relevant in all communities, strengthens relationships between established residents and newcomers, and builds diverse resident support for opposing further displacement.

- **Hermosa Here to Stay Land Trust**

Leaders of the Logan Square Blue Line eHub are currently seeking a commitment of \$2 million for an innovative affordable homeownership model designed to close the racial wealth gap and retain immigrant, Latina/o, and Black families by preserving the naturally occurring stock of affordable housing in West Logan Square and Hermosa.

- **PlayStreets Event Series & Opera-Matic Community Engagement Series**

Coordinated by Logan Square Neighborhood Association in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Public Health and Gads Hill Community Center, PlayStreets events create safe and accessible residential play areas for children to learn and be active and for neighbors to come together, with a focus on health promotion. Opera-Matic's 6 O'Clock on the Block events are free arts programs for community residents that are fun, participatory and promote healthy lifestyles. Both engagement series integrate a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) toolkit to educate residents on lead-based paint, mold, radon, and other potential hazards in the home.

- **Promotoras de Salud Initiative**

Coordinated by LUCHA in collaboration with the Hispanic Federation, this program provides peer education about health, nutrition, exercise, and wellness.

- **Walking Clubs**

Led by LUCHA, these clubs engage residents and promote healthy lifestyles through regular neighborhood walks.

- **Youth Engagement in Planning & Development**

This includes three interrelated efforts: Logan Square Neighborhood Association's (LSNA) Youth-driven Zoning Committee, which engages youth as leaders in local zoning discussions; the cross-city Youth Exchange (coordinated by LUCHA in Chicago), which will provide the opportunity for Chicago and Los Angeles youth leaders to visit each other's cities to learn about contextual community development challenges; and LSNA's Youth Placemaking summer program, which is engaging youth in conversations about community development, to place young people on the path to influential leadership.

Artist Darius Dennis brings to life a mural he designed on the side of the Dill Pickle Food Co-op located on Milwaukee Avenue, at the Spaulding exit of the Logan Square Blue Line train stop.



Place — Projects that Affect the “Built Environment” (e.g. Housing, Transit, Green Space)

- **EcoDistrict Creation**

The Logan Square Blue Line Community Table’s leaders have selected the nationally/internationally recognized EcoDistricts framework as a collaborative tool which sets goals for racial equity, cultural resilience, and climate protection across all projects. LUCHA hosted a 1-day training on EcoDistricts in November 2018.

- **Emmett Street Project**

Elevated partners have worked to ensure that this affordable housing development adjacent to the Logan Square station includes family-sized units, and is accessible to families with mixed documentation status.

- **Energy Efficient, Healthy, Affordable Units Near the 606**

Implemented by LUCHA, these energy efficient units are affordable, healthy and sustainable rental housing near the 606 Trail, including what is called a “Passive House” model—an approach to energy efficiency that reduces monthly utility costs, and has the potential to be replicated elsewhere in the neighborhood.

- **Home Weatherization**

LUCHA leads ongoing weatherization of neighborhood homes to ensure energy efficiency and cost savings for low income residents.

Process — Goals for Transforming How Decisions About Neighborhood Development Get Made

- **Access to Opportunity & Innovation in Economic Development**

Led by Center for Changing Lives and the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, we are advancing policies that: 1) incentivize “hire local” strategies, including procurement through minority and women-owned enterprises; 2) ensure an equitable, transparent distribution of workforce development investments that meet the needs of residents; and 3) support longtime and aspiring small business owners, including support for tailored financial and coaching services with a focus on anti-displacement, adaptability, and mitigation of barriers.

- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Framework**

Elevated Chicago partners are working together to build a common DEI framework for government agencies, developers and other organizations working in neighborhoods to ensure that their leaders, staff and contractors are representative of the community, and that their practices reflect the views and needs of people of color.

- **Logan Square Traffic Circle Redesign**

Logan Square Neighborhood Association, LUCHA and Chicago United for Equity are applying a Racial Equity Assessment tool to the Department of Transportation’s planning process to ensure that the redesign of the Logan Square traffic circle works for people of color.

- **Passive House Ordinance & International Building Code**

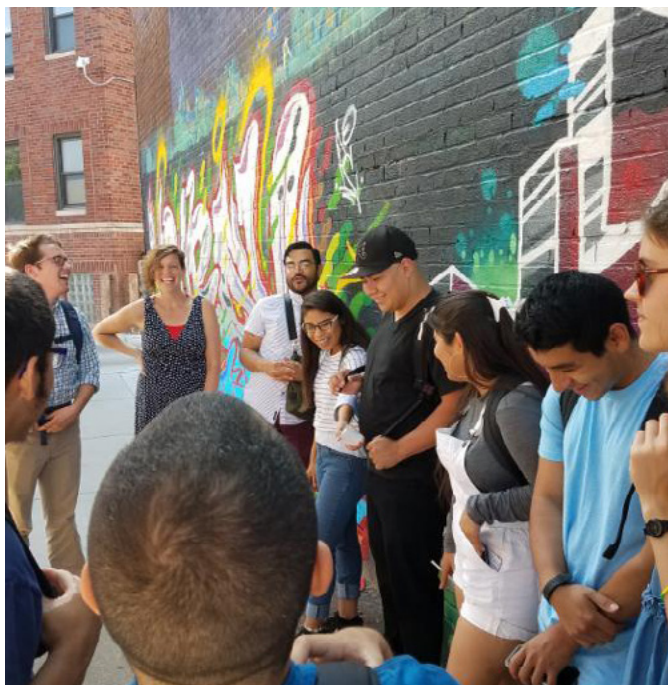
Through Elevated Chicago, LUCHA is advocating to update the municipal code so the construction of energy-efficient homes is easier and more affordable.

- **Policies to Retain Residents & Small Businesses**

Our partners are advocating for policies that expand housing and retail space affordability, including property tax reform, promotion of community driven homeownership models, affordability preservation ordinances, rent control, and preservation of affordable units among others.

- **Principles for Meaningful Community Engagement & Ownership**

Informed by ongoing work by organizations in Logan Square, including LUCHA and the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Elevated Chicago is creating a set of principles and recommendations for the City and other agencies to better engage community residents and businesses in decisions that affect the neighborhood. A recent study sponsored by Enterprise Community Partners has identified opportunities for community ownership in current and future developments in the eHubs.



Photographs were provided by LUCHA, LSNA, Sara Pooley, Raquel Venado Bolaños, and Kimberley Rudd. Graphic image support was provided by Cathy Lange and design by Foresight Design Initiative.

“Everything we do looks at who is most impacted by the problems we see. We make sure they are at the table when we make decisions.”

—Christian Diaz, Logan Square Neighborhood Association



CONNECTING PEOPLE,
BUILDING EQUITY

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