



CONNECTING PEOPLE,  
BUILDING EQUITY

2017-2020

3 Years





## There's a proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far...."

Elevated Chicago brings together a national and local movement to apply a racial equity lens to urban development. Our impact is rooted in our origin: an idea to connect and build a community of movers and shakers through the Strong, Prosperous And Resilient Communities Challenge, or SPARCC.

SPARCC sought to identify six regions across the U.S. that could take on a complex challenge: Impacting their built environments by applying a racial equity lens to urban planning and development, transit, public health, arts and culture, sustainability and more.

And so, in 2016, a small group of community builders, developers and funders gathered to discuss which Chicago organizations could be tapped to form a collaborative tenacious enough to take on the big [issues affecting development in Chicago's communities of color: gentrification, depopulation, disinvestment, lack of trust and flawed narratives](#). Elevated Chicago launched in 2017 when SPARCC chose Chicago as one of its six national sites. Here, we would explore the catalytic power of Chicago's public transit system to spark community revitalization, public and private investments, cultural resilience and access to public resources, and more.

By summer, our group had formalized our steering committee structure and hired a program director. By the end of the year, we had made our name and logo official, awarded tens of thousands of dollars in grants for community led activation of CTA station areas, and we were ready to host our first symposium on equitable transit-oriented development ([eTOD](#)).

**For additional  
information and links  
to our projects, we  
invite you to read the  
online version of this  
report at our website  
[elevatedchicago.org](http://elevatedchicago.org).**

Time has moved quickly since that first idea. Over the past three years, we have evolved from a small team to a group of about 100 [people who comprise our steering committee, leadership council, working groups, and community tables](#). And we have made hundreds of friends and partners throughout the Chicago region, the SPARCC network, even globally!

As we've worked to raise awareness of eTOD, our accomplishments, key learnings and adaptations have been many. And so have been the challenges. Still, we believe that eTOD can solve our city's challenges, from the longstanding inequities built in our city's planning and development systems, to the recent impact of the covid-19 pandemic.

This report shares highlights from Spring 2017 to Spring 2020. It showcases our three years of impact, one idea, one investment, one community at a time.

## Funders



JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.



## Community engagement

The past three years of hard work and organizing by Chicagoans has resulted in [significant equitable transit-oriented development \(eTOD\)](#) wins in their own neighborhoods. These wins were propelled by proactive engagement and collaboration by local residents and Elevated Chicago partners and resulted in more community input in development decisions.

In November 2018 over 300 residents of the [Logan Square Blue Line eHub](#) marched together to protest high rents and support a proposed 100-unit affordable housing project on Emmett Street, adjacent to the Logan Square of the CTA stop. In May 2020, as a result of tireless advocacy by the community, the City Council unanimously agreed to allocate \$24 million in tax exempt bonds toward the Emmett Street project. The nonprofit developer, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corp., is now charting a path toward construction in 2020.

In 2019, [The Center for Changing Lives \(CCL\)](#) and [Logan Square Neighborhood Association \(LSNA\)](#) collaborated on a [Community Benefits Agreement with Blue Star Properties](#), whose new hotel and restaurant property will sit right outside of the Logan Square Blue Line CTA station. As part of the CBA, the developer committed to having at least 75% of its employees be neighborhood residents and to paying them a minimum of \$17 an hour.

Communities came together to celebrate as well as advocate. The 2018 Chicago Resilience Festival in the [California Pink Line eHub](#) was organized to celebrate the end of a year's worth of creative placemaking in the form of art and stormwater management devices near four CTA stations around the city to further climate and cultural resilience. Residents turned up to dance, paint, eat and celebrate Chicago's diversity.



Hundreds of Logan Square residents participated in the **MARCH FOR EQUITY** organized by Logan Square eHub partners (2018)



**CHICAGO RESILIENCE FEST IN DOUGLASS PARK** celebrated the work of community organizations that received Climate and Cultural Resilience grants from Elevated Chicago (2018)

Community event at former Chicago Public School and future **OVERTON BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY INCUBATOR**, located in Elevated Chicago's 51st eHub (2019)





## Systems Change with the City of Chicago

Since our inception, Elevated Chicago has advocated for the City of Chicago to make its transit-oriented development (TOD) policy more equitable by covering more communities, by going beyond train stations to include heavily used bus routes, and by explicitly calling for the development of more affordable, accessible housing. Our advocacy is having impact.

As of this writing, a recommended plan for future TOD in Chicago, centered on equity, is being finalized for review by the City of Chicago. The policy recommendations are expected to be made public on August 17, 2020, at which time Chicago residents will have 30 days to comment. After that, Chicago's 50-member City Council, City departments and agencies, and the Mayor's Office, will review and, ideally, start adopting the recommendations as formal policy.

The plan was developed and written by an eTOD Working Group comprising more than 40 people representing community-based and citywide organizations, and City of Chicago departments (Housing, Planning and Development, Transportation, and Public Health), as well as the Chicago Transit Authority and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. The Working Group will convene via in-person and virtual meetings and workshops, pending public health guidelines and Elevated Chicago will make grants to community-based organizations to enable their participation and to fund community engagement events.

The Working Group's policy recommendations seek to address what we call "the two sides of displacement": First, preventing displacement on the city's North Side, where many Black and Brown and low-income families have too few affordable housing options as construction of small-unit luxury apartments has flourished; and second, attracting more development and investment without displacement to the South and West Sides, whose residents would benefit from jobs, housing, services and amenities, walkability and safety that would follow.

Recommended measures include: that the City of Chicago coordinates incentives for developers to encourage affordable housing near transit, particularly in communities where none or little exists; that City departments work more cohesively on the connected issues of planning and zoning, transit, parking and street design, affordable housing, and public health; and, that public engagement be a required and well-resourced strategy, so that community members have voice and ownership in what gets built in their neighborhoods.

Visit our website in mid-August to read our policy recommendations.



**IN APRIL 2019, CHICAGO ELECTED LORI LIGHTFOOT AS ITS FIRST BLACK FEMALE MAYOR.** Elevated Chicago members were invited to be part of her transition, and program director Roberto Requejo co-chaired the Transportation and Infrastructure committee, bringing [eTOD formally into the administration's agenda](#). Prior to the election, an eTOD ordinance had been passed by City Council in January 2019, mandating the development of the Equitable Policy Plan for TOD by August 2020. [The Mayor's Office and Elevated Chicago have created a working group to build the plan](#), centering it on people of color and low-income communities and planting the seed for racial healing and transformation beyond this historic election.

“When we started Elevated Chicago three years ago, I knew we would be radically changing the way we plan and develop around transit in neighborhoods. What I didn't know is that I would be making forever friends and family in Chicago and across the country! We have done and learned so much together, and there is so much more to accomplish to make Chicago the most equitable global city: let's make that goal our next stop!”

— ROBERTO REQUEJO, Program Director

## It all began with a SPARCC

[The story of Elevated Chicago is about more than our city](#): it's the story of how six different cities became part of a national movement to apply a racial equity lens to urban development and fundamentally change the way metropolitan regions invest in neighborhoods and grow.

That movement is the Strong, Prosperous And Resilient Communities Challenge, known as [SPARCC](#). It is an initiative of Enterprise Community Partners, the Low Income Investment Fund, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, with funding support from the Ford Foundation, The JPB Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Ballmer Group, and The California Endowment.

Prior to SPARCC, many individuals and organizations in Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, Memphis and the San Francisco Bay Area were working towards racial equity, health, and climate resilience. By connecting us, SPARCC transformed separate community initiatives into a single powerful movement capable of creating meaningful change through partnerships and national influence.

Elevated Chicago was launched with a three-year grant from SPARCC in 2017; our work since then led to securing a second round of funding from SPARCC in 2020.

[The ravages of COVID-19 have illuminated disparities in racial equity, health and environmental conditions.](#)

Finding hope these days is hard. But the past three years of SPARCC work have set the stage and provided building blocks for an equitable and just recovery. As SPARCC leaders wrote in April 2020, "Despite unprecedented challenges across all of society, so much of what is needed to respond and rebuild... is based on centering social, economic and racial equity. We all must remain committed to working with local partners and lawmakers to advance the health and sustainability of communities nationwide – a goal that is now more important than ever."

Our path forward will not be easy, but these first few years show what can be accomplished when we unite to make our communities strong, prosperous and resilient.



SPARCC focuses on city-wide change through partnerships. For example, our work with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) and Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) is a partnership success story. CMAP committed resources to Elevated Chicago through a Local Technical Assistance Program grant for the Garfield eHub of the Green Line South – the first time CMAP and RTA embarked jointly in eTOD planning.

**ELEVATED CHICAGO WELCOMED NEARLY 100 COLLEAGUES FROM SPARCC'S SIX REGIONS** to "Celebrate Reflect Connect Imagine," a national convening in 2019 to mark the end of the first three years of the SPARCC initiative, and to start planning the next three.



## Pipeline Projects

Residents, organizers and community leaders in each Elevated Chicago eHub are working on projects of significance that will have great impact on the built environment, public health, climate resilience, access to arts and culture, and equity. We call these our pipeline projects.

Since 2018, we have supported our eHubs' work with grants, advocacy and technical assistance. We have also set metrics to measure the impact on equity and climate resilience, such as improved walkability and community cohesion. In 2019, we joined Enterprise Community Partners in launching Equity Forward, a recoverable grant pool to deepen our support for these pipeline projects. Get to know the projects here, and look out for our updates on them in 2021.



**OVERTON SCHOOL** in Bronzeville.

### In the Green Line South eHub:

Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative is seeking to create a cohesive visual identity for the Green Line South area throughout Washington Park and Woodlawn, resulting in coordinated development strategies, improved services, and engaged residents and businesses. Working with Borderless Studio's Creative Grounds, the initiative will include place-making features, physical markers, memorialized plaques and art installations starting with the area surrounding the Overton School in Bronzeville. Impact: Decreased community economic hardship; decreased flooding; increased presence of local landmarks, symbols, cultural spaces and public art in the community; improved collaboration, cohesion, decision-making.



**LATINOS PROGRESANDO** in Marshall Square.

### In the California Pink Line eHub:

Latinos Progresando is seeking to acquire and renovate a vacant, former public library building and to create a new model of community health service delivery on Chicago's southwest side. Its new resource center will serve as a community hub, providing access to immigration legal services, behavioral mental health screening and treatment, and trauma-informed group counseling sessions for all ages, along with a robust referral system. Impact: Improved mental health and wellbeing; decreased flood risk; improved walkability; increased neighborhood cohesion and belonging.



**WHEN NEW HOUSING OR BUSINESSES ARE BUILT NEAR TRANSIT**, they should create opportunities for residents of various income levels, not just affluent people. But too often, exciting ribbon-cuttings are just the beginning of resident and cultural displacement.

The Emmett Street apartments in Logan Square are a model of eTOD for both process and outcome. Built by Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation, this development will create 100 affordable homes adjacent to the CTA station. It was supported by 100-plus organizations thanks to the advocacy of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association in partnership with Elevated Chicago.

## In the Logan Square Blue Line eHub:

Next to the station, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation will build 100 units of affordable housing for families, and LUCHA is seeking to preserve affordable homeownership and rental opportunities in West Logan Square and Hermosa through acquisition and rehabilitation of properties through a Land Trust. This strategy will preserve the stock of naturally occurring affordable housing in the target area by creating a competitive, self-regenerating acquisition fund; rehabbing multi-family buildings; and cultivating a pipeline for low-to-moderate income families. Impact: Decreased community economic hardship; decreased flood risk; increased presence of local landmarks, symbols, cultural spaces & public art in the community; increased community cohesion.

## In the Kedzie-Homan Blue Line eHub:

The Foundation for Homan Square is seeking to transform public, urban space with community-driven plans by developing affordable housing for current and new residents, and providing opportunities for retail entrepreneurs to launch or expand their businesses. Project components include the Homan/Harrison mixed-use project (new construction of transit-oriented development project at a gateway intersection), and affordable rental housing units (construction of 50-60 new units of affordable housing on vacant lots acquired through the Cook County Land Bank and City of Chicago). Impact: Improved walkability; increased neighborhood cohesion and belonging; improved air quality; increased resident retention.

Community engagement around pipeline projects in **KEDZIE-HOMAN BLUE LINE EHUB.**



Rendering of Garfield Green, a sustainable affordable housing project, in **KEDZIE-LAKE GREEN LINE EHUB.**

## In the Kedzie-Lake Green Line eHub:

The Garfield Park Community Council is seeking support to address barriers to community ownership and the formation of a community housing coalition (comprised of residents, churches and activists) to engage with housing plans and developments such as Garfield Green, a new, 40- to 80-unit housing development (previously known as C40); being developed by Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) at Kedzie and Fifth Avenues, along a City of Chicago-designated "Resilient Corridor." Impact: Increased resident retention, decreased community economic hardship, improved air quality.



## Our grant-making

Since 2017, we have awarded more than [\\$2.9M in grants](#) to organizations in Chicago that support eTOD – from pre-development funds for capital projects to programming dollars for [walkability studies](#), [capacity-building](#) for community collaboration, increasing climate resilience and [arts and culture](#) events for the general public.

To stay true and accountable to our commitment to racial equity, 67% of our grants (\$1.75M) have been made to organizations led-by people of color advancing eTOD and 66% (\$196K) of our total contracts have been made to MBEs. The majority of our grants are approved by the Steering Committee either through approval of the annual budget or by full review of applications.

**PRE-DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY FORWARD: \$1,080,000**

**WORKING GROUP: \$415,000**

**CLIMATE AND CULTURAL RESILIENCE: \$352,000**

**COMMUNITY TABLE COLLABORATION: \$320,000**

**WALKABILITY AND HEALTHY CHICAGO 2.0,  
WITH THE CHICAGO DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH: \$300,000**

**RACIAL EQUITY: \$250,000**

**COMMUNITY-LED DATA ANALYSIS: \$105,000**

**ACTIVATION OF CTA STATIONS: \$100,000**

**ECODISTRICTS: \$100,000**

**REAL ESTATE SERVICES AND  
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: \$75,000**

**ETOD WORKING GROUP: \$40,000**

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CURRICULUM  
AND LEARNING COHORT: \$30,000**

## Art near Elevated Chicago eHub stations

New community-driven art was co-designed in partnership with Elevated Chicago, including projects through grants to Center for Neighborhood Technology.



Art in the eHubs: (top) An outdoor mural on 51st Street in **GREEN LINE SOUTH**; (bottom) mural planning in **LOGAN SQUARE BLUE LINE**





Art in the eHubs: At the Garfield Park Community Council Garden in **KEDZIE-LAKE**, with support from CNT



(At left) Art in the eHubs: Artist installation of a viaduct mural near **CALIFORNIA PINK LINE**



(Near left) Art in the eHubs: Mural near **KEDZIE-LAKE GREEN LINE**

(Far left) Art in the eHubs: Mural at Anthony Overton Elementary in **GREEN LINE SOUTH**





Art in the eHubs: Artistic woodwork at the **KEDZIE-LAKE GREEN LINE** installed by Safer Foundation and BKE Design and featuring inspirational quotes from Black leaders and artists

“

What an amazing three years this has been! I am so grateful to have worked alongside so many creative, dedicated colleagues, and with so many impactful organizations. Over the past three years we have laid a strong foundation, and built an incredible network committed to developing solutions to begin addressing the systemic racial inequities that have plagued our communities for generations. Through collaboration and community, we have accomplished so much together, and the journey continues.

— **MARLY SCHOTT, Program Associate, Elevated Chicago**

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## Other art near transit

Art projects in our eHubs represent community members' experiences, provoke conversations, enhance walkability, and add beauty to daily life. To learn more about recent art initiatives near transit, click below.

[“Guns into Shovels” was initially conceptualized by artist Pedro Reyes as a response to gun violence in Culiacán, Mexico.](#) In partnership with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), Reyes reproduced his work in the North Lawndale neighborhood in 2017. Reyes worked with SAIC and North Lawndale residents to melt down gun parts; then Lawndale Forge turned them into shovel heads. The shovel handles were created by youth involved in woodworking programs at the Greater West Town Training Partnerships, and community members used the shovels to plant the first trees of the Oaks of North Lawndale initiative near the Kedzie-Homan CTA station. By symbolically transforming guns from “agents of death into agents of life,” the initiative brought people together to grow a safer and healthier community.

[In 2018, we worked with two Black-led organizations, BKE Designs and the Safer Foundation, to create “Spellcasting for Peace.”](#) BKE Designs is a Chicago-based design firm and the Safer Foundation is an organization that provides employment training to justice-involved people to help them live more vibrant and sustainable lives. BKE Designs and Safer’s program participants created plaques with uplifting messages by Black thinkers and activists that were permanently displayed on the [Green Line’s Kedzie-Lake station](#). The idea was to add positivity to the physical environment and inspire people as they go about their daily lives. “Spellcasting for Peace” was intentionally designed so that the process and end product benefitted the creators as well as the people and place receiving the artwork.



## We've Been Training for This

By Leslé Honoré

Don't listen to them  
The voices that say  
you will be able to work  
At home  
The same way you work  
At your cubicle  
In your office  
Safe in the walls of infrastructure  
Built around you  
Brick and mortar that divides  
The privileged  
From the heroes  
Who are just now being called  
Essential  
Because this has changed us  
Will continue to change us  
But we have trained for this  
We who know the power of a we  
We who will not let the fists of policy  
Beat the faces of the invisible  
We know how to link arms across this city  
We have implanted ourselves in this city  
On the streets  
In the high rises  
On the 5th floor  
We have been training for this  
And this is not a drill  
This is another battle in this long war  
To shake off the individual  
To cement ourselves in community  
To protect those who make our lives  
What they are  
Without a living wage  
Without sick days  
Without retirement  
Without acknowledgement  
we are sounding the alarm  
Business as usual is done  
Normal was never normal  
We are activating  
In all the ways we know how  
And in some ways we have never dreamed

And we will be weary  
And we will ache  
For the people we can not save  
And for time we can not recoup  
And we are allowed  
To bend a little  
Because we don't break  
To rest a little  
Because we give more than we take  
To pause a little  
Hope a little  
And be human a lot  
We will lend each other strength  
Lend each other peace  
We will lend each other love  
So we can return to the trenches  
We will find our way out of this  
Through this  
Together  
Leading with love  
Because we have been training for this

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(Above) **OVERTON DAY AT ANTHONY OVERTON ELEMENTARY** brought together community members to explore the role of schools in urban development.

(Right) **OAKS OF NORTH LAWDALE** brings together the North Lawndale community, the City of Chicago and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to reimagine the neighborhood as a healthy, peaceful and tree-lined place.



## Stormwater/flooding management

Developing more climate resilient communities is an Elevated Chicago goal. In our eHubs, poor stormwater management causes homes and community assets to flood, and extreme temperatures and poor air quality hurt people's health. That's why we support tree planting, solar panel installation, and stormwater management devices in all our eHubs. Here's two of our initiatives:

### Oaks of Lawndale in the Kedzie-Homan eHub

In 2017, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and two community-based organizations, Homan Grown and the North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council, launched the Oaks of North Lawndale, an art and community development project. The project is recreating the community's urban forest by planting and maintaining over 7,000 trees in North Lawndale, where there are fewer trees than any other area in the city. Since launching at Nichols Tower, the group has planted more than 1,000 trees and their work has been recognized by the Chicago Region Trees Initiative.

### Climate Resilience grants and art projects

The Center for Neighborhood Technology's Climate and Cultural Resilience program (CCR) aims to address climate change challenges and strengthen local arts and culture near CTA transit stops. Several CCR grants have been awarded for green infrastructure demonstration projects with complementary public art pieces that illustrate how investments in climate resilience benefit local cultural and economic resilience.

The Overton Park Green Transformation is a CCR-funded initiative. Anthony Overton Elementary School, located in the Green Line South eHub, was one of 49 public schools shuttered in 2013 by the City of Chicago. Since 2018, the school parking lot has been transformed by BORDERLESS STUDIO's Creative Grounds initiative, which explores the community and urban roles of school grounds following mass school closures in Chicago. The group has installed art and painted large-scale maps showing public schools closed in 2013, and proposed new uses for those schools along with Bronzeville's formal and informal assets. A rainwater garden is being built on the former school's parking lot.

CCR supporters and partners include Elevated Chicago, Enterprise Community Partners, Arts+Public Life, Garfield Park Community Council, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, LUCHA, Open Center for the Arts, and Washington Park Development Group.

## Elevated Chicago Symposia

The [Elevated Chicago symposia on eTOD](#) demonstrate our commitment to increase awareness and dialogue about the people, places and processes that make transit-oriented development equitable. Our 2017, 2019 and 2020 events brought together some of Chicago's most influential planners, organizers and advocates from public, private and non-profit institutions. They discussed ways to plan a city that works for everyone, centering development around transit as an asset, and strengthening neighborhoods without displacing people.

Each symposium was designed with [members](#) of our steering committee and community tables, who helped shape topics and conversations on issues such as: developing place-based partnerships to identify, procure and secure funds for eTOD projects; retaining human and cultural capital in communities of color; gathering community input and advocating for equitable policies; incorporating environmental, economic and culturally resonant principles and best practices in development; and, dismantling top-down approaches so everyone can have a seat at decision-making table.

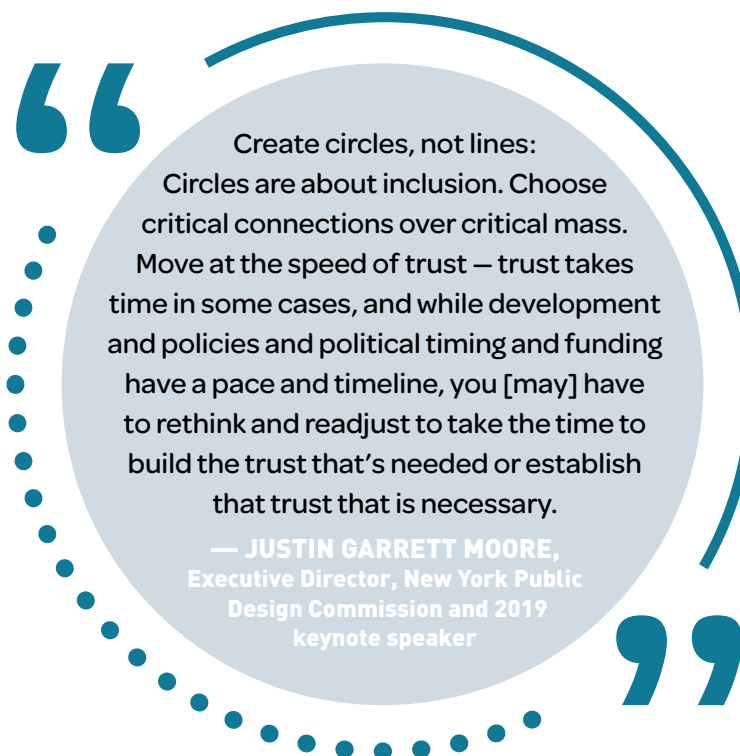
Our keynote speakers have been: Dr. Julie Morita, past commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health and now executive vice president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; Dr. Helene Gayle, president and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust; Justin Garrett Moore, executive director of the New York City Public Design Commission and co-founder of BlackSpace; Dr. Allison Arwady, commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health; and Andre Brumfield, urbanist and architect, Gensler. Each event also involved local artists, whose performances gave beautiful and layered context to inequities in planning and transit.

Each symposium has been supported by the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, which has hosted the in-person gatherings, supported virtual ones, and housed our exhibit "Undesign the Redline," and co-sponsored by Enterprise Community partners and the MacArthur Foundation.

Our [eTOD](#) symposia give us time and space to come together to talk, to listen, to learn – sharpening our vision and growing the community of eTOD advocates.

## Symposium Speakers

The following individuals, listed in alphabetical order by last name, were speakers at our past eTOD symposia. All affiliations are current as of July 2020.



**Daniel Aaronson**, The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

**Harry Alston**, Safer Foundation

**Hannah L. Anderson**, Chicago Dept. of Public Health and Artist

**Dr. Allison Arwady**, Chicago Dept. of Public Health

**Juan Sebastian Arias**, Enterprise Community Partner

**Lori Berko**, University of Chicago, Office of the President

**Nootan Bharani**, UChicago Arts, Arts + Public Life

**Jeremiah Boyle**, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago

**Andre Brumfield**, Gensler

**Kirby Burkholder**, IFF

**Michael Burton**, Bickerdike Redevelopment Corporation

**Asiaha Butler**, Residents Association of Greater Englewood (R.A.G.E.)

**Sarah Cardona**, Metropolitan Planning Council

**Charlie Corrigan**, JP Morgan Chase Foundation

**Maurice Cox**, Chicago Dept. of Planning and Development

**Megan Cunningham**, Chicago Dept. of Public Health

**Devin Culbertson**, Enterprise Community Partners

**Jessica Davenport**, Black Girls Break Bread

**Michael Davidson**, The Chicago Community Trust



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Public transportation provides access to resources. We need to do as much as we can to help these kinds of developments and projects be successful.

— **DR. JULIE MORITA**, Executive Vice President, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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**Christian Diaz**,  
Logan Square  
Neighborhood  
Association

**Bill Eager**,  
Preservation  
of Affordable  
Housing

**Theo Edmonds**,  
University of  
Louisville School  
of Public Health  
and Information  
Sciences

**Ghian Foreman**,  
Emerald South  
Economic  
Development  
Collaborative

**Kendra  
Freeman**,  
Metropolitan  
Planning Council

**Jennie  
Fronczak**,  
LUCHA

**Justin Garrett  
Moore**, City  
of New York  
Public Design  
Commission

**Dr. Helene  
Gayle**, The  
Chicago  
Community Trust

**Andrew Geer**,  
Enterprise  
Community  
Partners

**Stephanie  
Gidigbi**, NRDC

**Lucy Gomez-  
Feliciano**,  
The Nature  
Conservancy and  
the Chicago Park  
District

**Juliana  
Gonzalez-  
Crussi**, Center  
for Changing  
Lives

**Vito Greco**,  
Elevate Energy

**Jacky  
Grimshaw**,  
Center for  
Neighborhood  
Technology

**Leslé Honoré**,  
Poet and author

**Aaron Johnson**,  
Center for  
Changing Lives

**Deborah  
Kasemeyer**,  
Northern Trust  
Bank

**Dr. Danielle  
Kizaïre**, Bronze-  
ville Urban  
Development

**Aarti Kotak**,  
PEAK6

**Vickie Lakes-  
Battle**, IFF

**Adrienne  
Lange**, Latinos  
Progresando

**Juan Carlos  
Linares**,  
University of  
Chicago Law  
School

**Susan  
Longworth**,  
Federal Reserve  
Bank of Chicago

**Bernard Loyd**,  
Urban Juncture  
Inc.

**Omar Magana**,  
OPEN Center for  
the Arts

**James Matanky**,  
Matanky Realty  
Group

**Anna Mayer**,  
Taller de Jose

**Gaylord Minett**

**John Moon**,  
Federal Reserve  
Bank of San  
Francisco

**Dr. Julie  
Morita**, Robert  
Wood Johnson  
Foundation

**Mary Nicol**,  
Office of the  
Mayor, City of  
Chicago

**Marisa Novara**,  
Chicago Dept. of  
Housing

**Tarnynon  
Onumonu**, Poet

**Rosa Y. Ortiz**,  
Confeti, LLC

**Krysta Pate**, Com-  
munity Reinvest-  
ment Fund

**Jair Pinedo**,  
Sunshine  
Enterprises

**Melinda Pollack**,  
Enterprise  
Community  
Partners

**Shelley Poticha**,  
Natural  
Resource  
Defense Council

**Roberto  
Requejo**,  
Elevated Chicago

**Shandra  
Richardson**,  
The Chicago  
Community Trust

**Jake Schnur**,  
MB Financial

**Marly Schott**,  
Elevated Chicago

**Geoff Smith**,  
Institute for  
Housing Studies  
at DePaul  
University

**Adrian Soto**,  
Greater  
Southwest  
Development  
Corporation



### THE UNDESIGN THE REDLINE YOUTH SUMMIT,

sponsored in 2019 by Elevated Chicago in partnership with Enterprise Community Partners, brought together 60+ young Chicagoans to explore the impacts of redlining, reflect on existing neighborhood assets, and find solutions to create equitable and climate-resilient spaces.

**Tyronne  
Stoudemire**,  
Hyatt  
Corporation

**Kevin Sutton**,  
Foundation for  
Homan Square

**Mike Tomas**,  
Garfield Park  
Community  
Council

**Joanna Trotter**,  
The Chicago  
Community Trust

**Lyndon Valicenti**,  
Daylight

**Carmen  
Vergara**,  
Esperanza  
Health Centers

**Ayanna  
Williams**,  
YannaCello

**Joshua Wilmoth**,  
Full Circle  
Communities  
Inc.

**Elise  
Zelechowski**,  
Office of the  
Mayor, City of  
Chicago

**Mariia  
Zimmerman**,  
MZ Strategies

## Free Range

By Tarnynon (Ty-yuh-nuh) Onumonu

My Chicago be grid-mapped  
Superman up high spot train car lines  
Like speeding bullet through cityscape  
What a sweet escape  
Fall asleep on one side blue/red  
Wake up black/white  
Always knew red split city black/white  
Never took issue with this until nightfall  
Better be on your side by nightfall  
But nevermind that

CTA, the great equalizer  
Rich Dad, Poor Dad collide here  
Rush Hour, jam packed  
Personal space now mythic past  
All aboard the mystery machine  
Used to ride for hours just to Christopher Columbus neighbor-nooks  
unseen  
My scope widened every time I'd board a new line

Why we be sectioned off, bracketed,  
Rather than just one Line  
Thoughts swirl as I read billboard signs  
Talkin bout, "Building a New Chicago"  
But I ain't seen nothin new on my side

CTA reek of hope and despair  
Cloaked in stale loose cigarette smoke and school children's candy  
wrappers  
This be Chicago feature, Chicago future  
Joy ride on buses  
Joy still be here  
Love still be here

Bucket Boys wrists' ricochet heartbeats off the air  
Their wooden staffs split traffic like red sea  
Come see my cityscape dream  
Youth Ready, witness their glistening eyes gleam  
Access, if they get it  
Believe me, they got it  
Open these unmarked borders

Listen to these kids kidding around  
Can you hear them skipping the dozens over turnstiles?

We fashion them complacent  
But they be curious  
Wanna see what's on the other side  
Was far into my highschool years before I frequented the northern sector of Lake Shore Drive  
But why is that?  
When the city has always been mine  
Or is it?  
Why those from suburbs arrive downtown faster than us from the southside?

This be my city plain, my city plan  
Before I take flight, I sit perched on this land  
Chicago, there's still time to do right by me  
Since before the Great Migration,  
Legends of the fall have been yearning to be free  
Don't trap us, don't clip our wings  
Just to stealthily set up shop where we be quarantined  
Gentrification is real. We're losing ground.  
Redline from 95th be expanding but you displace us now  
Then place your station inside our station  
We be over-policed like long lines marching towards the county

We're counting on this system collapsing and beginning anew  
Empathize with us. On your feet place our shoes  
What if your children were kept out of the Loop  
We deserve more than just a day at the Taste or Lollapalooza  
We are not this city's disposable income  
This city's scapegoat  
We only wish to roam.

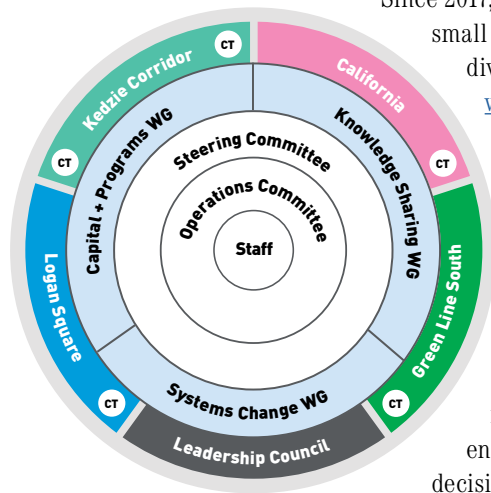
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Tarnynon Onumonu



## Collaborative People



Since 2017, Elevated Chicago has grown from the small team that conceived of our work to a diverse group of more than [100 people](#) [who comprise our steering committee, leadership council, working groups and community tables](#). We have expanded the definition, voices and stakes of equitable transit-oriented development by creating new systems of decision-making and re-envisioning leadership. Our bodies of governance are constructed to facilitate authentic, inclusive and effective community engagement, and power and ownership in decisions affecting the built environment.

### More about our structure:

**Community Tables** at our sites are made up of neighborhood residents, community leaders and business owners, particularly those within the ½ mile radius of each station, and others with a close relationship to this area, such as participants in community programs or daily commuters. Our five [community tables inform our strategies and determine our priorities for capital projects, programs, policies, narratives, data and technical assistance](#).

**Working Groups** bring together community-based and region wide partners to provide technical assistance and capacity building to Elevated Chicago's workplan in three areas: Capital & Programs, Systems Change, and Knowledge Sharing. Institutional partners co-chair these groups, which provide oversight and support to cross-site project and initiatives, and technical assistance to eHub partners.

**Leadership council** members are government, business, and civic leaders who are willing to change the culture, policies and practices that impact equitable development in Chicago, promote more [eTOD](#), and remove barriers to it.

**Steering committee members** are leaders in the public, private and civic sectors, including regional and city-wide institutions and community-based organizations who serve as bridges and connectors to Elevated Chicago's eHubs. The composition of the Steering Committee reflects the different lenses of Elevated Chicago: racial equity, health, climate change, and arts and culture.



**THE ELEVATED CHICAGO STEERING COMMITTEE** members and proxies at the 2019 eTOD Symposium. From left to right: (back row) Kevin Sutton, Mike Tomas, Jennie Fronczak, Adrian Soto, Dan Fulwiler, Ghian Foreman, Marly Schott, (front row) Roberto Requejo, Leslé Honoré, Christian Diaz, Shandra Richardson, Nootan Bharani, Andrew Greer, Kendra Freeman, Lori Berko, Emily LaFlamme, Juan Carlos Linares. For a full list of names and photos of past and current steering committee members, see pages 17 and 18.

“

It's important for people to know how you're thinking, what you think about where you want to live, and how you want conditions to be better. Everything interacts with everything else, but you don't get it until you're sitting in a certain seat to see how everything goes together. I didn't really get the whole big picture of that until I joined the community council.

— **YVONNE SHIELDS**, Kedzie-Homan eHub community table member

”

## For All Aboard: The 2019 Elevated Chicago Symposium

By Leslé Honoré

This City  
Of Broad Shoulders  
And Bold Hearts  
This Windy City  
That blows into the sails of your souls  
sending you soaring on dreams  
And hawk wings if you let it  
This City of Emerald Necklaces  
And Great Lakes  
Juxtaposing nature  
And sky scraper  
This City Brutal and Beautiful  
This City of 16 shots  
And cover ups  
This City that waters asphalt with blood  
This Sanctuary City  
This Segregated City  
This Rainbow Colored  
Rainbow Connected  
Blue lines  
And blue collar  
Red lines cutting through  
Red lining legacies  
This Brown and Green  
Pink and Purple  
You can travel the world  
On an Elevated Train  
In this City  
Mexico and China  
Italy and Lithuania  
The descendants of Slaves  
Great migrations  
Native land  
Black Free Man founded  
This City  
With two tales  
That we love as fiercely  
As it winters are harsh

Let us dedicate today  
To this City  
To using Our Voices  
For those who are silenced  
To using Our Privilege  
To open doors  
Build bridges  
Shatter ceilings  
And with outstretched hand  
Welcome in the denied  
Let us do the work  
That is more than  
Trending words  
Of Equity and Inclusion  
This is heavy  
But it is our Brother  
Our Sister  
Our Humanity  
Let us not be weary as we labor  
Let us always remember why we fight  
Why we carry with us  
Into every space  
This Message  
Of Hope  
If we can better link this City  
If we can irrigate funding and equity  
Into barren lands of food deserts  
And school closures  
If we can dam the Tsunamis of  
Gentrification  
Slow the erosion of immigrant families  
Who built beauty with bare hands  
Only to be out bid  
And their Culture Commodified  
If we can ensure that a train ride from  
95th and the Dan Ryan  
To the Loop  
To Evanston

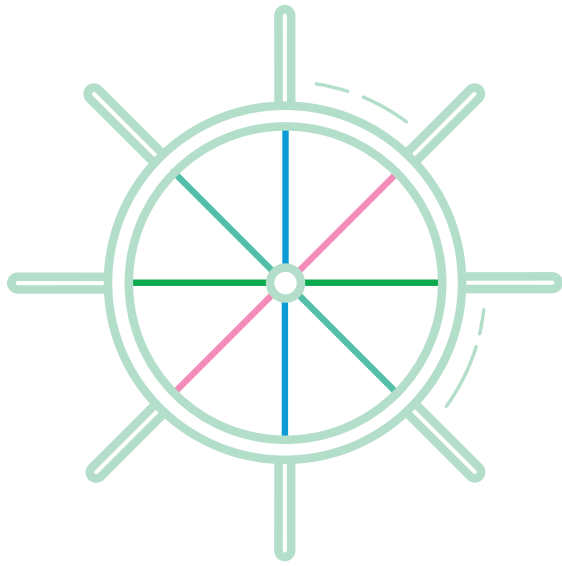
Only has the back drop of  
Changing cultures  
And not the hideous Demarcation  
Of Divestment  
If we can be stewards of this City  
Then we can create better stewards  
Of the World  
Because a train in Chicago  
Is more than transportation  
To and from school and work  
It's a passport  
To the globe  
With open minds  
With intention and purpose  
Let us work  
Broad Shoulder to Shoulder  
Hope maybe a thing with wings  
But sometimes it glides on  
Elevated Tracks  
Let us deal hope today  
And  
Let us start  
With this City

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**Leslé Honoré** is a “Blaxican” Poet, the author of *Fist & Fire: Poems that Inspire Action and Ignite Passion*, and a member of the Elevated Chicago steering committee.  
[LesleHonore.com](http://LesleHonore.com)



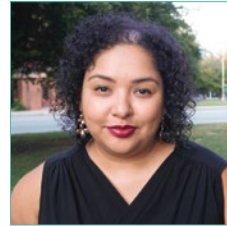


## Steering Committee

### *Current Members*



**Nootan Bharani,** Arts  
+ Public Life, University  
of Chicago



**Lissette Castañeda,**  
Latin United  
Community Housing  
Association



**Megan Cunningham,**  
Chicago Department of  
Public Health, City of  
Chicago



**Michael Davidson,**  
The Chicago  
Community Trust



**Christian Diaz,**  
Logan Square  
Neighborhood  
Association

## Our Collaborative Team

Elevated Chicago appreciates the support and guidance of our collaborative team over the past three years, including our Steering Committee, Leadership Council and Management Team. Our team members bring passion, expertise and fierce commitment to authentic community engagement and power in decisions affecting the built environment of Chicago. Their leadership and effort have helped Elevated Chicago drive change and build connections necessary for eTOD. We are deeply grateful for the hard work of present and past members—it's been an incredible three years!



**Ghian Foreman,**  
Emerald South  
Economic Development  
Collaborative



**Kendra Freeman,**  
Metropolitan Planning  
Council



**Dan Fulweiler,**  
Esperanza Health  
Centers



**Andrew Geer,**  
Enterprise Community  
Partner



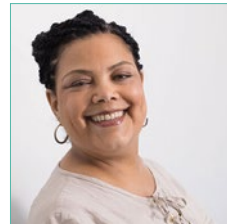
**Jacky Grimshaw,**  
Center for  
Neighborhood  
Technology



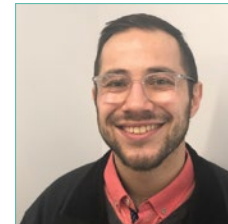
**Luis Gutierrez,**  
Latinos Progresando



**Leslé Honoré,**  
Poet and Author



**Vickie Lakes-Battle,**  
IFF



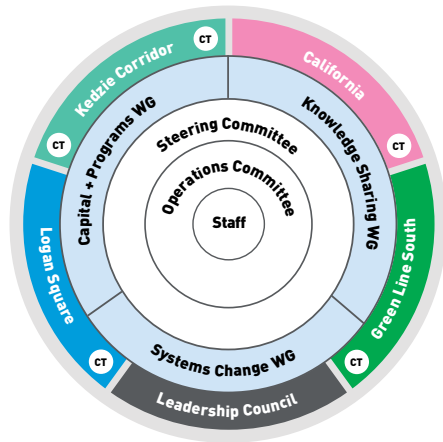
**Jair Piñedo,**  
Sunshine Enterprises



**Kevin Sutton,**  
Foundation for Homan  
Square



**Mike Tomas,**  
Garfield Park  
Community Council



**ELEVATED CHICAGO'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE** is made up of linked teams that bring together civic and business leaders, community members and program staff.

### *Past Steering Committee Members*

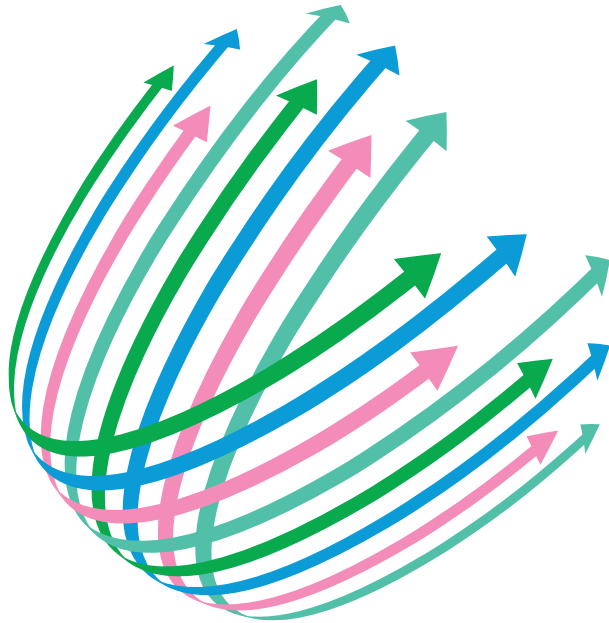
- Lori Berko**, University of Chicago
- Scott Bernstein**, Center for Neighborhood Technology (Retired)
- Devin Culbertson**, Enterprise Community Partners (SPARCC)
- Ethan Daly**, Sunshine Gospel Ministries
- Jennie Fronczak**, LUCHA
- Lucy Gomez-Feliciano**, Logan Square Neighborhood Association
- Bernard Loyd**, Urban Juncture, Inc.
- Joe Neri**, IFF
- Rosa Y. Ortiz**, Enterprise Community Partners, Past Steering Committee Co-chair
- Shandra Richardson**, The Chicago Community Trust, Past Steering Committee Co-chair
- Elise Zelechowski**, City of Chicago

### *Current Steering Committee Proxies*

- Kate Ansorge**, IFF
- Lydia Collins**, Foundation for Homan Square
- Kathleen Gregory**, Esperanza Health Centers
- Joel Hamernick**, Sunshine Gospel Ministries
- LaShone Kelly**, Garfield Park Community Council
- Emily Laflamme**, Chicago Department of Public Health, City of Chicago
- Adrienne Lange**, Latinos Progresando
- Marcheta Pope**, Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative
- Chandra Rouse**, Enterprise Community Partners
- Brett Swinney**, Arts & Public Life, University of Chicago
- Joanna Trotter**, The Chicago Community Trust
- Drew Williams-Clark**, Center for Neighborhood Technology
- Susan Yanun**, Logan Square Neighborhood Assoc

### *Past Steering Committee Proxies*

- Juan Sebastian Arias**, City of Chicago
- Kirby Burkholder**, IFF
- Marcelina Gonzalez**, Latinos Progresando
- Juliana Gonzalez-Crussi**, Center for Changing Lives
- Lynnette McRae**, Black Chicago Tomorrow
- Robin Schabbes**, Chicago Community Loan Fund
- Adrian Soto**, Greater Southwest Development Corporation



## Leadership Council

### Current Members

**Erin Aleman**, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

**David Ansell**, Rush University Medical Center

**Allison Arwady**, Chicago Department of Public Health, City of Chicago (co-chair)

**Gia Biagi**, Chicago Department of Transportation, City of Chicago

**Michelle Blaise**, ComEd (proxy member)

**Michael Connelly**, Chicago Transit Authority

**Melissa Conyears-Ervin**, City Treasurer

**Maurice Cox**, Department of Planning and Development, City of Chicago

**Leah Dawson Mooney**, Chicago Transit Authority (proxy member)

**Helene Gayle**, The Chicago Community Trust, Leadership Council Member (co-chair)

**Katanya Henry**, City of Chicago (proxy member)

**Dan Lurie**, Office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot

**Samir Mayekar**, Office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot

**Candace Moore**, Office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot

**Marisa Novara**, Chicago Department of Housing, City of Chicago

**Rob Rose**, Cook County Land Bank Authority

**Melissa Washington**, ComEd

### Past Leadership Council Members

**Aarti Kotak**, Peak6

**Juan Carlos Linares**, Office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot

**Carol Morey**, Chicago Transit Authority

**Julie Morita, MD**, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (co-chair)

**David Reifman**, CRG

**Rebekah Scheinfeld**, Civic Consulting Alliance

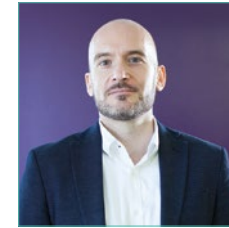
**Kurt Summers**, Investor, Former City Treasurer

**Joe Szabo**, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (retired)

**Chris Wheat**, Natural Resources Defense Council

## Elevated Chicago Staff

### Current Staff Members



**Roberto Requejo**,  
Elevated Chicago,  
Program Director



**Marly Schott**,  
Elevated Chicago,  
Program Associate

### Past Staff Members

**Sabrina de la Vega**, Elevated Chicago, Past Program Intern

**Amorita Falcon**, Elevated Chicago, Past Program Intern

**Samira Hanessian**, Chicago Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA Member, City Intern

**Jai W. Hayes-Jackson**, Chicago Resilience AmeriCorps VISTA Member, City Intern

**Caleb Herod**, Elevated Chicago,  
Past Program Intern

**Alex Perez**, Elevated Chicago,  
Past Program Intern

**For additional  
information on all  
communities and  
presentations by  
Elevated Chicago  
Community Tables:  
[elevatedchicago.org/  
communities](https://elevatedchicago.org/communities).**



## What people are saying about Elevated Chicago

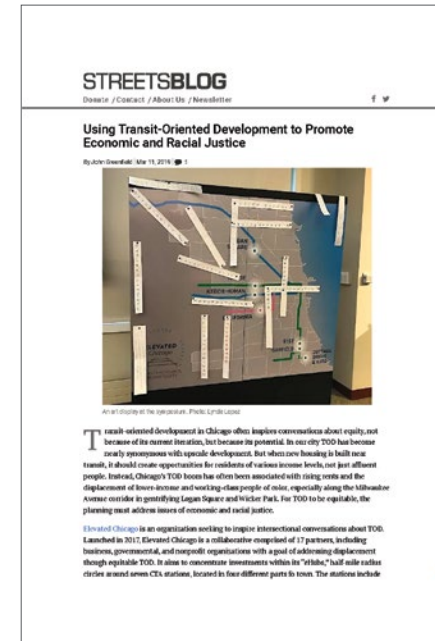
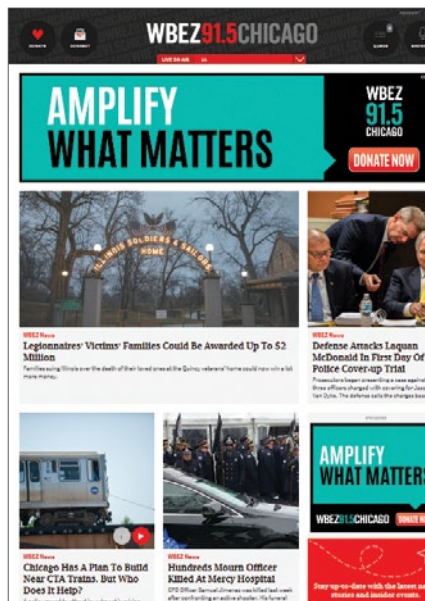
Elevated Chicago has been helping build awareness of eTOD through traditional and social media. Here's what people are saying:



LeeAnn Trotter of **NBC5** discusses new art projects near transit stations with Roberto Requejo in 2018.

**CRAIN'S CHICAGO** features Undesign the Redline in 2019, an exhibit by Elevated Chicago, Enterprise Community Partners, and Design the We that explored the history of racist disinvestment.

Natalie Moore and Odette Yousef of **WBEZ CHICAGO** talk to Elevated Chicago members in November 2018 as part of an in-depth story about racial equity and transit-oriented development.

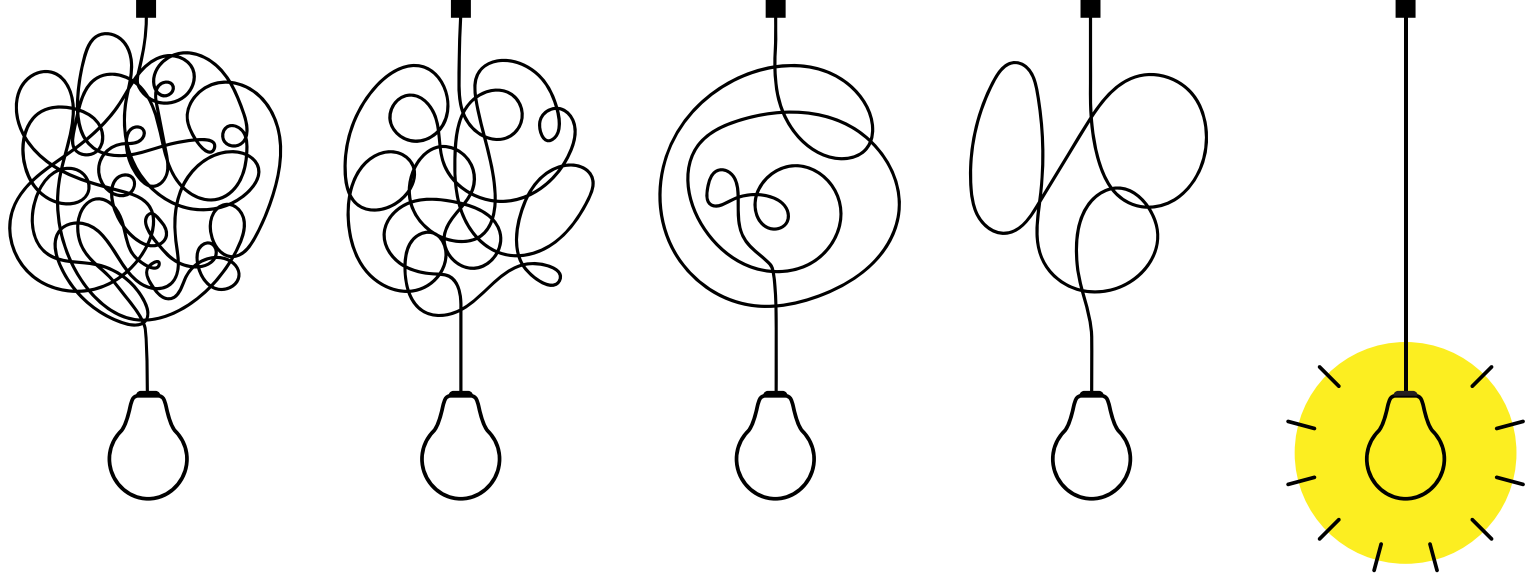


**STREETS BLOG** covers the 2019 ETOD Symposium.

**CRAIN'S CHICAGO** published an opinion in June 2020 by Roberto Requejo on the role of eTOD in economic development and covid-19 recovery.



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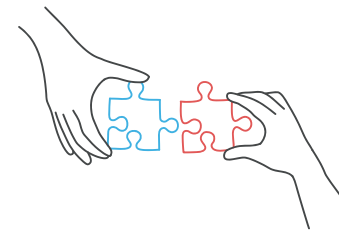
## Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

Collaboration is \_\_\_\_\_. If you're part of a collaborative, then you could likely fill in the blank with words like "rewarding" and "transformative" but also "challenging" and "under-resourced." However you put it: collaboration is a constant learning experience. Some of our lessons so far:



### Trust is in very short supply.

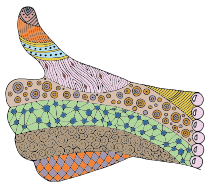
And rightfully so. For decades our communities of color have been intentionally segregated, disconnected and exploited by government, developers, anchor institutions and financial interests. As a new player with members from all those sectors, Elevated had to earn the trust of residents and community leaders. Some projects still have a long way to go to develop the trust necessary for transformational collaboration. We need healing and restorative processes to replenish, nurture, and create such trust.



### More resources and incentives are needed for collaboration.

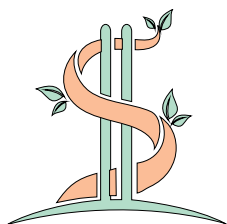
Our city is designed for competition, fragmentation, and division. Leaders and practitioners who collaborate are often asked to do so on top of their regular jobs, without additional compensation or resources to pay for these efforts. While some funders and government partners are starting to understand this, the current environment in community development skews toward competition. Let's change this.





## Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) need to advance faster and farther.

Many organizations impacting the built environment have limited commitments to diversity, to equity and inclusion. We lack a common definition and framework for DEI. What feels like a stretch for some, e.g. ensuring that development teams reflect the diversity of the communities where they work, or contracting with community organizations to lead community engagement, is the bare minimum for others.



## Capital needs to adapt to communities.

Often, the types of capital we provide, especially debt, are not what our community partners need. Sometimes the problem isn't capital absorption, it's capital adaptability. Our SPARCC partners are committed to fixing this with us, but the financial and philanthropic sectors are slow to understand the demands of communities of color, who keep reminding us that debt and liabilities, even in advantageous terms, will not propel their projects.



## Negative narratives about communities of color are deeply entrenched, especially in traditional and in social media.

We need to tell stories differently and better, change narratives and narrators, and amplify voices so people can tell their own story. In news, social media, and research, our communities are often depicted from a deficit lens, focusing on what is lacking and problematic, not on their many assets and successes. These narratives reveal the racism underlying our city. Dismantling these dynamics has been hard.

**Tackling these challenges will not be easy, but Elevated Chicago has built momentum, partnership and capacity in just a few years and we are excited to keep pushing forward.**



It has been an incredible privilege to see the growth of Elevated Chicago from its inception through today. We have created space for people's diverse skills and talents to flourish, where everyone is welcomed as they are, and where professional and lived experiences are acknowledged and valued. Together, the staff and members have given new life and strength to each other's work. In doing so, Elevated Chicago is helping build a movement centered on equity and collaboration for our city – and for the nation. Our web of neighborhood and national level networks also are in Atlanta, LA, Memphis, Denver and the San Francisco Bay Area, making the movement even stronger.

— ROSA Y. ORTIZ, founding partner and community resident



This report was produced by Elevated Chicago with support from the Knowledge Sharing Working Group and the team of documenters that has worked with us since our inception.



CONNECTING PEOPLE,  
BUILDING EQUITY

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